

Intersection: Public Place in a New Jamaica

by

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Bachelor of Architecture
University of Miami
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June 1992

Submitted to the Department of Architecture
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree
Master of Science in Architecture Studies
at the
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
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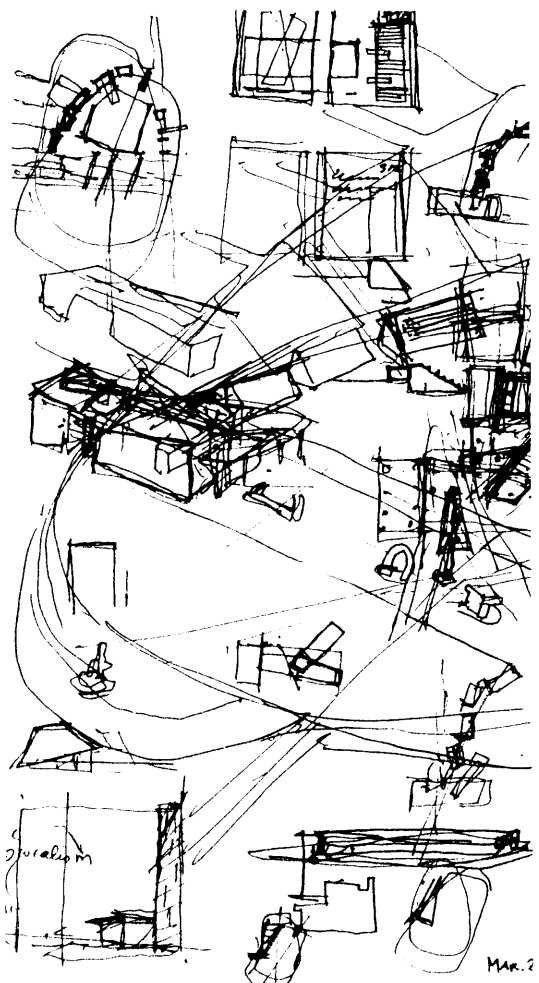
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Abstract

Jamaica, a microcosm of the Caribbean and the developing world, is heir to an ambivalent legacy. While she benefits from a unique cultural tradition brought in part through colonialism, she suffers from the nihilistic tendency to imitate colonial socio-economic practices. The society thus becomes more and more polarized, and is poorer for it.

The condition is a paradigm for architecture and urbanism. The city stratifies itself into political and economic zones, allowing for its own demise through the lack of communication and cross-fertilization.

In anticipation of the city's continued explosion, the thesis explores the possibility of a new public place at which the separate social groups may converge. It will facilitate the accessibility of Jamaicans to their own diverse population, and foster self-pride as they recall and celebrate their traditions, accomplishments and ambitions.

The program therefore consists of public facilities which bring Jamaican cultural traditions into relationship with each other. The complex is intended to be a multi-purpose sports/festival ground. Its focus will be a Museum of National Heritage.

The site is National Heroes' Park, a 68 -acre oval which sits at the boundary of the parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew and marks the entrance to the old city of Kingston, capital of Jamaica. It originated as a horse-racing course in the 19th century but has been transformed successively over the years. Part of it is now dedicated as a shrine to Jamaica's National Heroes - the seven men and woman who were deemed to be instrumental in the building of the nation.

Thesis Supervisor:	William L. Porter
Title:	Norman and Muriel B. Leventhal Professor of Architecture and Planning

Thesis Readers:	Ellen Dunham-Jones Attilio Petruccioli
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Big up to the following:

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Aunt, for making sure I ate properly those first years away;

Rocky, for being my first fan and cheerleader;

Mom and Dad, whose love for, support of, and belief in me has been selfless and unchanging. Though no words could express my gratitude, I rest in the knowledge that now, as always, you share in the pride and relief of this accomplishment.

Dee, my love and my sunshine, for making the future worth every minute of this effort.

God, for everything ...

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f1.1.1 Part of Mural, University of the West Indies, Mona.

I. *SITE*

"The night starts to fade,

but the moonlight lingers on;

There are wonders for everyone!

The stars shine so bright,

but they're fading after dawn;

There is magic in Kingston town..."

Clancy Eccles and Kendrick Patrick

Thoughts on A Mixed Culture

Jamaica is the quintessential pluralist* society, and Kingston, the pluralist city. This has to do with the fact that West Indian colonialism was a unique project: When Great Britain pushed into the New World in the 17th and 18th centuries, she may have found fertile lands, but certainly no trace of an indigenous culture. The extermination of the Caribbean Indians by the Spanish, and their own subsequent expulsion, had seen to it that there was no reference, no existing foundations (as there would be in India, or in Africa and the Middle East) upon which Britannia could propagate her aspirations of empire. Into this cultural vacuum came two distinct groups: Expatriates from the motherland; and Africans in shackles, bound to a life of slavery. They were later joined by Chinese and Indian labourers in the 19th century, as well as Semitic peoples in search of fortune in the prosperous economic climate of those years. Their various

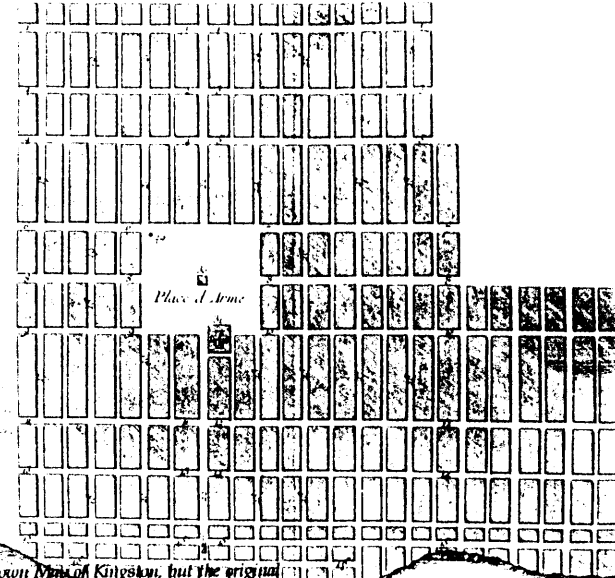
*pluralism (*Random House*): a theory that there is more than one basic substance or principle.

Explication des Chiffres

1. Rue du Nord
2. Rue Charles
3. Rue Rich
4. Rue Bernard
5. Rue Brandon
6. Rue Harwood
7. Rue Stanton
8. Rue de la Reine
9. Rue Beaufort
10. Rue D'Arme
11. Rue D'Arme
12. Rue D'Arme
13. Rue D'Arme
14. Rue D'Arme
15. Rue D'Arme
16. Rue D'Arme
17. Rue D'Arme
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26. Rue D'Arme
27. Rue D'Arme
28. Rue D'Arme
29. Rue D'Arme
30. Rue D'Arme
31. Rue D'Arme
32. Rue D'Arme

PLAN DE LA VILLE DE KINGSTON

Surant le projet donne par le Colonel Christian Lilly



Explication des Chiffres

17. Rue de l'Est
18. Rue du Prince
19. Rue Brandon
20. Rue d'Orange
21. Rue du Chevalier
22. Rue du Roy
23. Rue de l'Eglise
24. Rue du Marais Noir
25. Rue du Duc
26. Rue Stanton
27. Rue de l'Est
28. Rue d'Harwood
29. Marianne
30. Grande Calerne
31. Eglise
32. Lieu en se rend la Jach

BIG MIXUP: This is the earliest known Map of Kingston, but the original Plan was drawn by John Goffe. Col. Christian Lilly was appointed long after the City was settled in 1703. Note No.18 - Prince Street has been corrupted to Princess Street. - National Library Photo.

Plan de la Ville de Kingston

f1.1.2 Bellin's Map of Kingston, c.1760.



f1.1.3 Parade Square, c.1990.

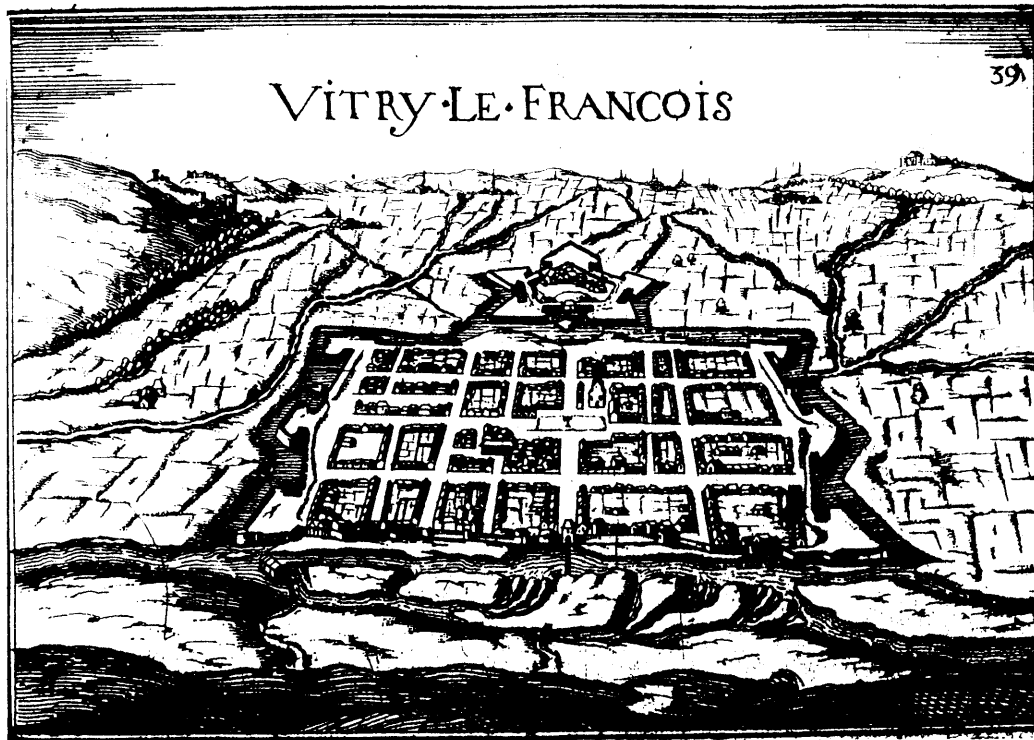
cultures, (and their blood in many cases) merged inextricably over time to create a diverse society of amicable, if not always co-operative, accord.

This has had decisive implications for urban development. B.W. Higman has observed that: " In the Jamaica of the 18th and 19th centuries, there were two competing attitudes to space and its organization. One, derived from the European frame of mind, sought to create a rigidly ordered, geometric landscape. The other, with its roots in Africa, placed a greater value on fluid natural lines"¹. In fact neither attitude could materialize in a pure form. The European model, for all its 'legitimate' power, could not overcome the will of the mass slave population, and indeed the contour of the land, in the shaping of the public realm. The African mentality by comparison, could not fully withstand the cultural assault and socio-economic privations exacted upon it by colonial domination. The colonist and the conquered were forced to adapt to the new environment.

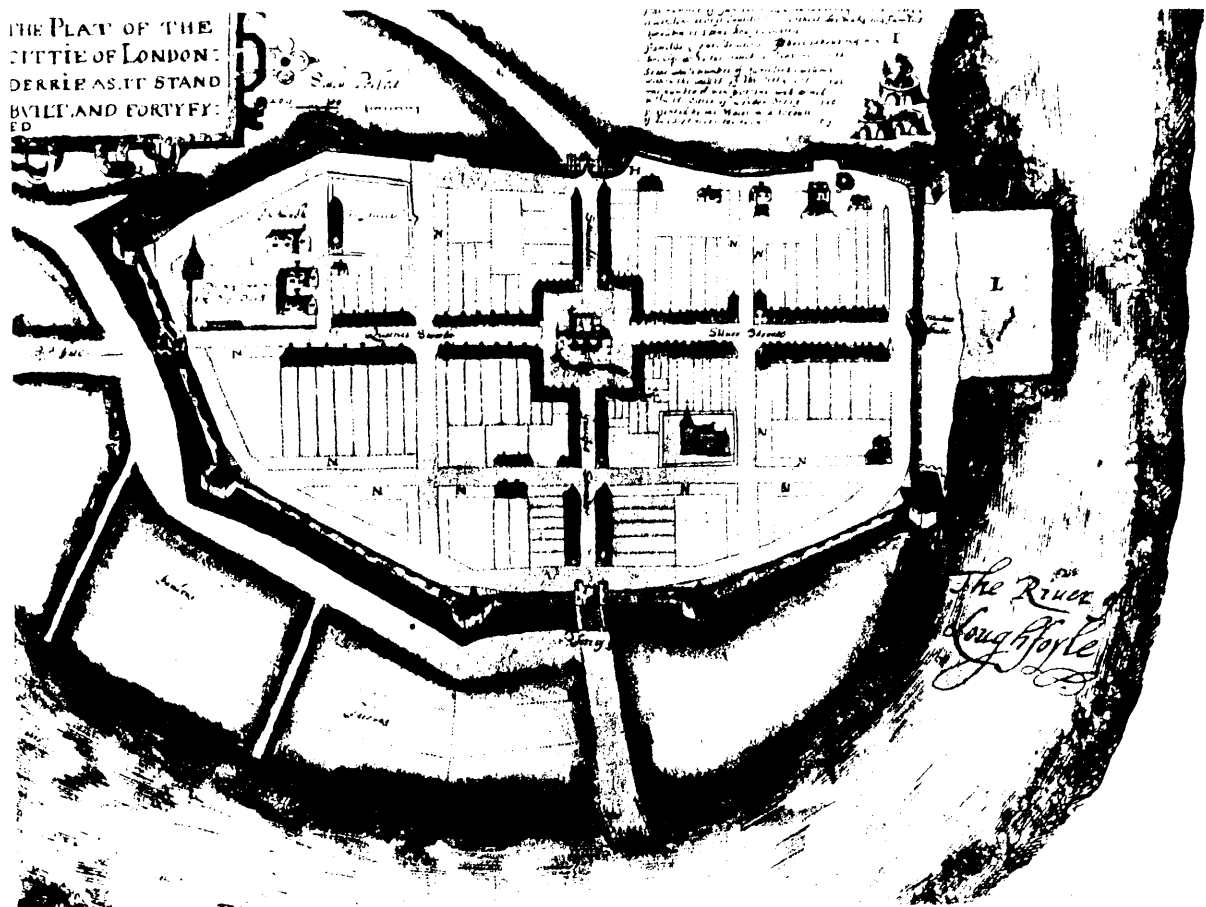
Bellin's 1760 map of Kingston (planned by John Goffe in 1692) reveals the first futile attempt at idealism. An account by Johnson reads: "The town was drawn up as a parallelogram, one mile long from Port Royal Street to North Street, and half mile wide from East to West Streets. The main street (King) ran South to North in the dead centre, and it was intersected dead centre also by Queen Street."² Where both "royal streets" intersected was reserved for a four-acre square to be used as a military camp (hence the name 'Parade Square'). The *tabula rasa* context influenced the translation of the theoretical Renaissance utopia - then in use in Europe for the construction of several 'new towns' - to Caribbean

¹In Jamaica Surveyed, p 291.

²Anthony Johnson, Kingston: Portrait of A City, p 47.



f1.1.4 View of Vitry-Le-Francois, France, 1634.



f1.1.5 Plan of Londonderry, Northern Ireland, 1622.

shores³. In this, Kingston would briefly resemble American colonial towns such as Pittsburgh and Savannah. In fairness, this was not a totally arbitrary geometric exercise: the City, after all existed primarily for the defense of its inhabitants, who were subject to the horrors of frequent pillage from competing colonial powers. It was thus practical to lay out its borders more or less equidistant from a central gathering area, whose primary function was to house the military battalions charged with its defense. Also, the city's North-South orientation allowed the flow of prevailing winds to cool the hot, dusty Liguanea Plain*.

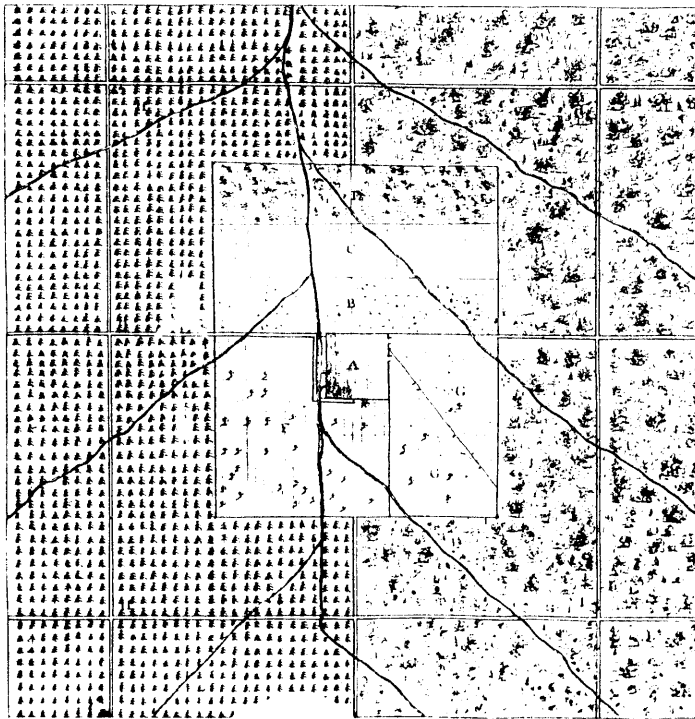
The imposed uniformity of the plan nevertheless begins to ridicule its own rigidity. The main streets must contort in order to connect to pre-existing routes to and from the city. Their dominance is compromised. What Rowe calls "conditions of confusion and picturesque" - in the case of Kingston, river and stream beds later built as drainage ditches and gullies - create their own irrational order between the grid⁴.

Outside the city, early plantation maps showed a similar confounding of this attempted regimentation. The mainstay of the colonial economy was the production of primary products (mainly sugar) for export to the metropole, and the majority of Jamaicans lived and worked within this spatial context. The landscape was thus, for the most part, partitioned by the borders of such entities, and in fact, Kingston's future expansion would be dependent on the atrophy of the sugar plantation. It is here that two trains of thought *vis a vis* space planning may be observed. The immense

³John Reys, The Making of Urban America, p 12.

*The gently sloping 150,000 acre parcel on which Kingston is built: - Johnson purports the name to have derived from 'iguana', the large reptilian which would have been found in abundance there at the time of colonization.

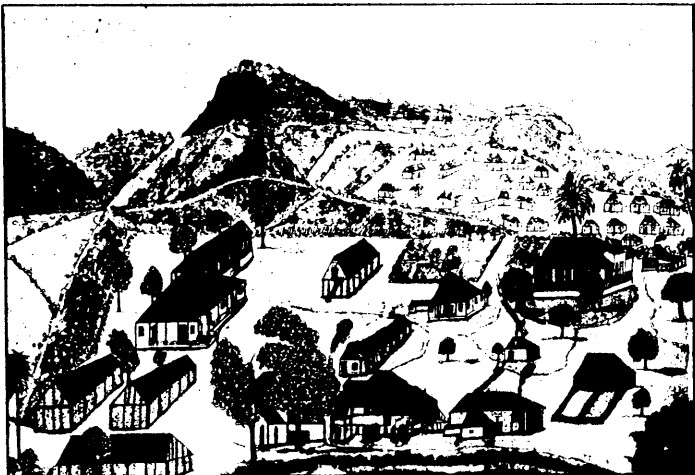
⁴Colin Rowe, Collage City, p 107.



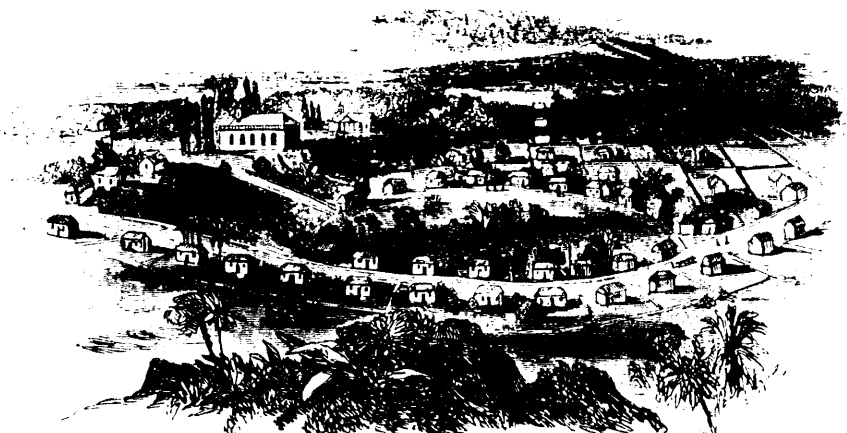
f 1.1.6 Laborie's Ideal Plan for a Coffee Plantation, 1798.



f 1.1.7 Plan of Belvedere Estate, St. Thomas, 1800.



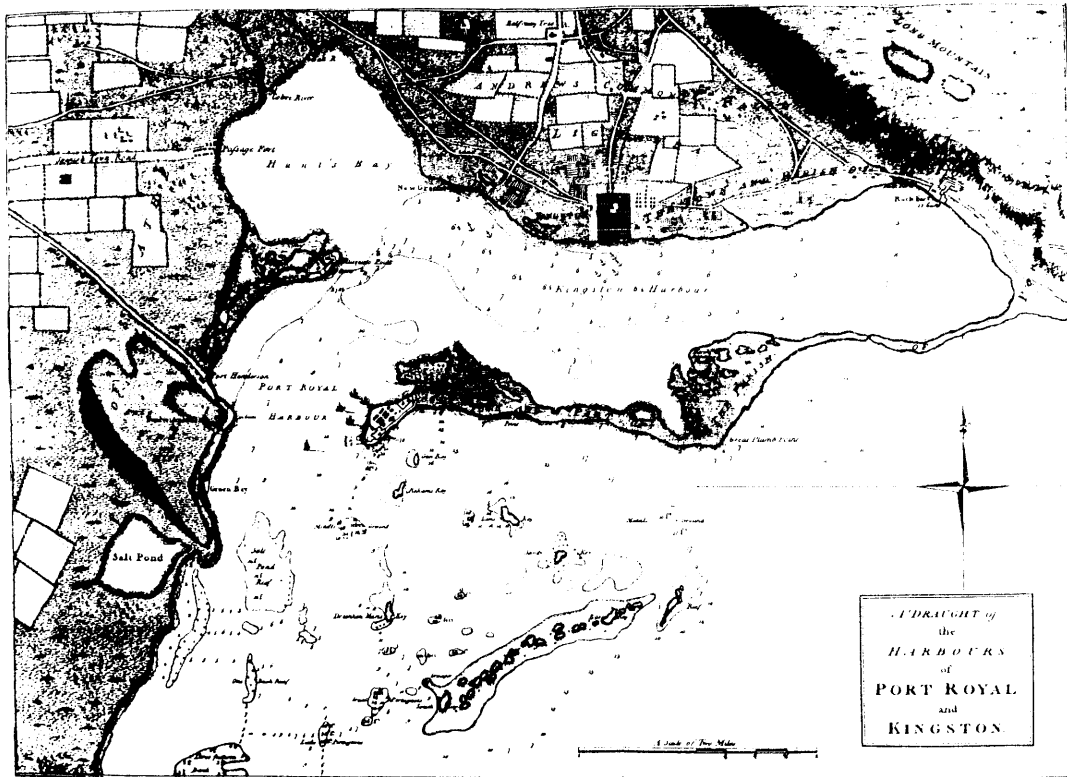
f 1.1.8 Plan of Lucky Valley Estate, Clarendon, 1816.



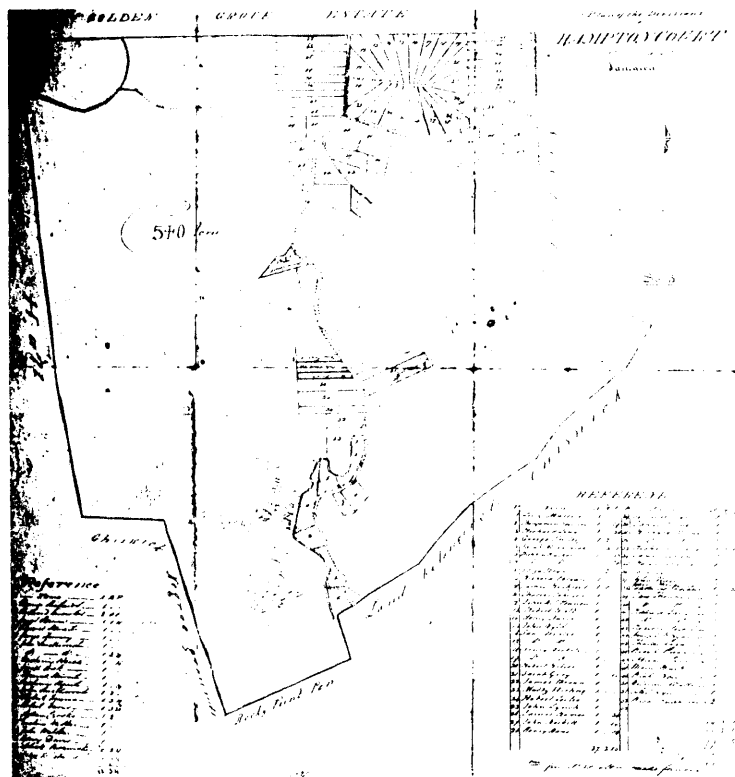
f 1.1.9 View of the 'Free Village' of Sligoville, St. Catherine, 1843.

grounds were often laid out in a more or less triangular fashion, with great house, sugar-mills and works, and slave quarters occupying the three apices. While the great house functions adhered strictly to a precise geometric ordering, the slave village was patterned on a different conception. From the main road reaching the rest of the property, the village grew off in multiple branches to either side, in every which way describable, creating a motley composition on the land. Higman recounts an 18th century description: "I never witnessed on the stage a scene so picturesque as a Negro village...Each house is surrounded by a separate garden, and the whole is intersected by lanes, bordered with all kinds of sweet-smelling and flowering plants". Significantly, the writer, a planter contemplating his own operations, made note of the vitality of his slaves' lifestyle, in spite of their spartan accommodations. No doubt he was privy to the workers' assertion of independence and individual expression, in reaction to the authoritarianism of plantation life. Paradoxically, the arrangement was not far removed from the British tendency to plan gardens in Romantic, fluid curves, as an escape from the hardness of urbanity. This place of harmonious conflict where, as Higman says, "myth and reality converged", was the literal and symbolic foundation of the future city.

The unplanned growth of Kingston was accelerated by the abolition of the slave trade and the subsequent downfall of sugar production, the plantocracy, and sugar estates. But while it was economic necessity which drove planters to subdivide larger and larger sections of their properties for purchase by Kingstonians, the fragmentation of the urban fabric continued a trend of land privatization begun even before emancipation in 1838. A look at Lowndes's map (f 1.1.10) already shows



f1.1.10 Lowndes's Map of Kingston and Surroundings, c.1770.

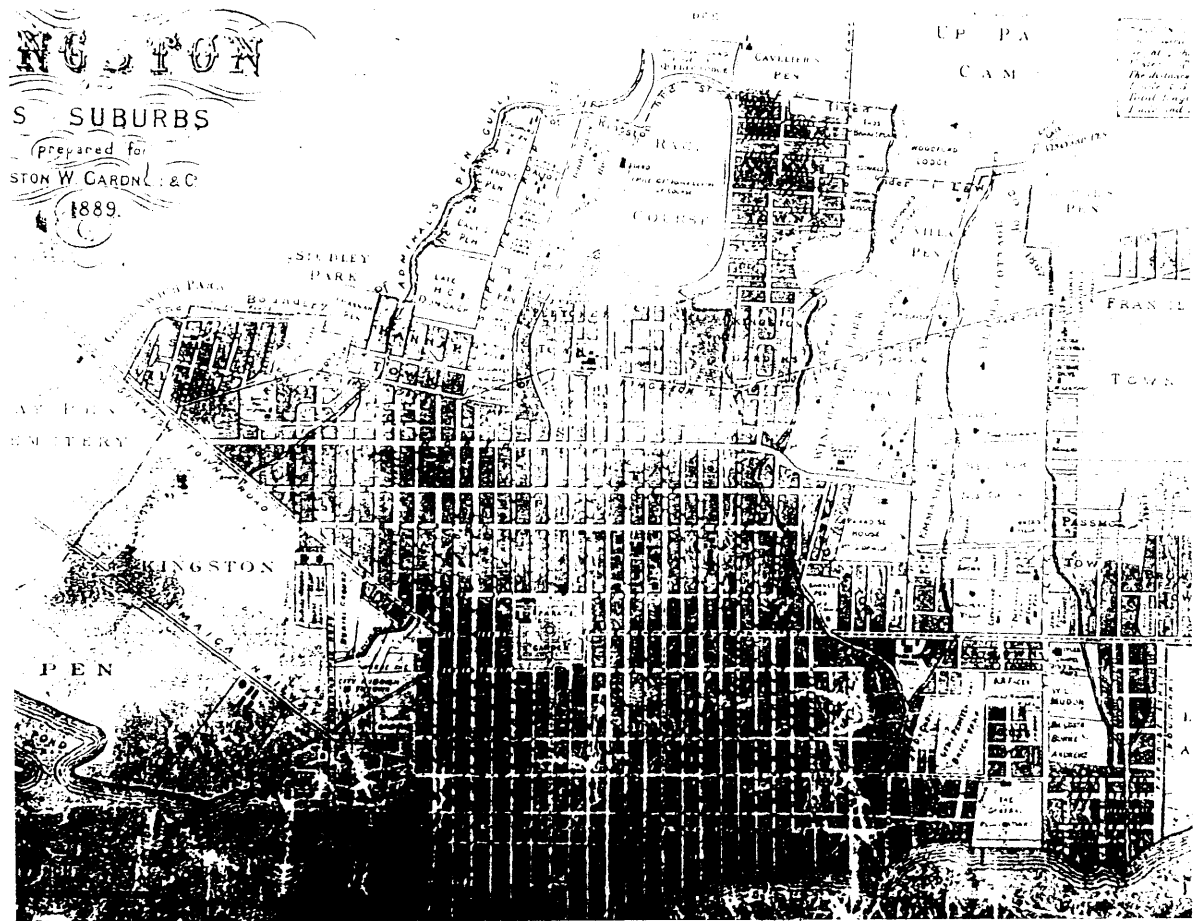


f1.1.11 Plan of Hampton Court Estate Subdivision, St. Thomas, 1847.

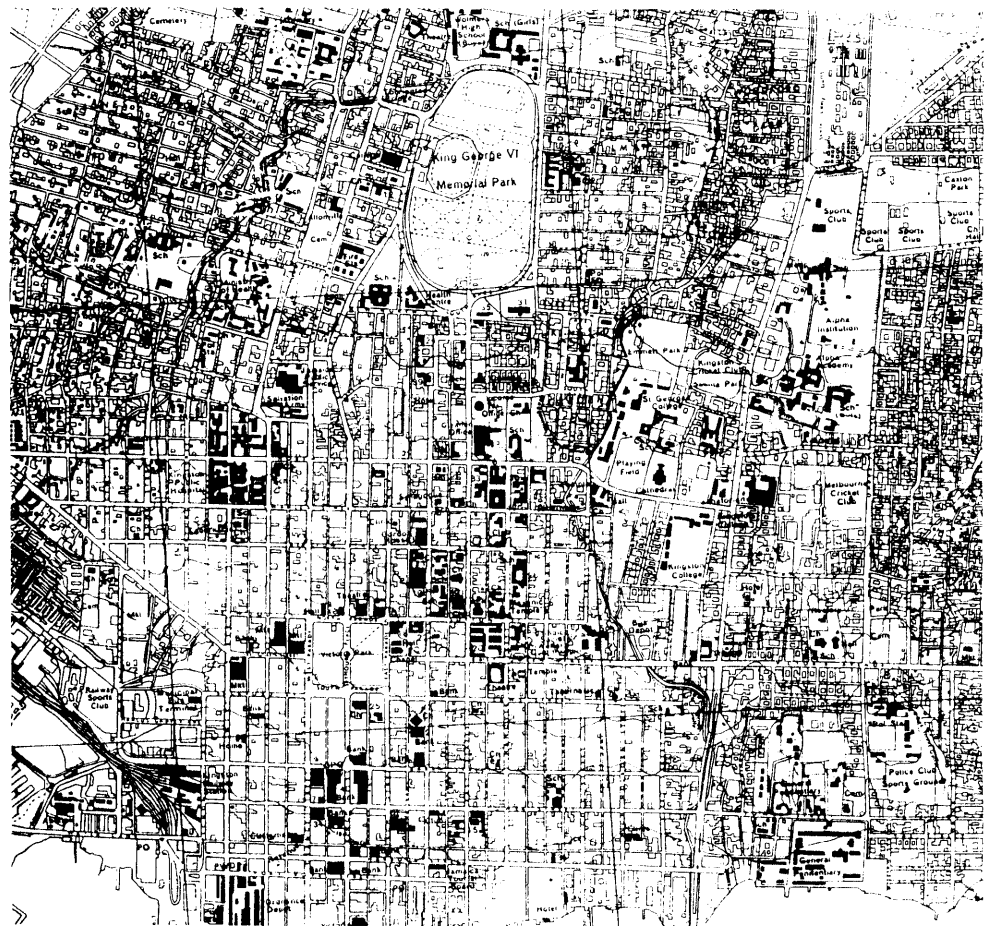
the grid of Kingston surrounded by pockets of small holdings called 'pens'. It was these semi-urban havens to which the city's merchants retired in the evenings to escape the hot and sometimes squalid atmosphere of the city centre, or which the rural planter kept for his lengthy stays during the theater season. Furthermore, a new intermediate class had entered the picture: Their ranks drew not only from the illicit unions between master and slave, but from the progressive hybridization of the population due to the infiltration of multiple ethnic groups described above. The new bourgeoisie - free, in most cases educated - possessed too the where-with-all and the desire to live outside of the city in its more comfortable foothills. Add to this a burgeoning ex-slave population, anxious to forge its own destiny in the new society, which preferred to live on subsistence farms in locations far and near to the city, and you have an urbanism which could astound even the most knowledgeable analyst, or seasoned traveler. On this, Higman is articulate: "...The end result was a complex creole mosaic, the Jamaican landscape being composed of intermixed large and small holdings, some laid out on strict geometric principles and others following the natural contour of the land. Thus the landscape mirrored the structure and constituents of the society".

Kingston would eventually creep forward to engulf an area of 192 square miles, an astonishing 96 times its original area⁺. The grid of the old city occupies only a small portion of this sprawl, leaving one to assume the presence of a secondary ordering device implicit in the 'plan'. Studying the growth pattern of Kingston (f 1.1.12-13) shows more clearly the presence of demographic and economic forces run amok. There is no

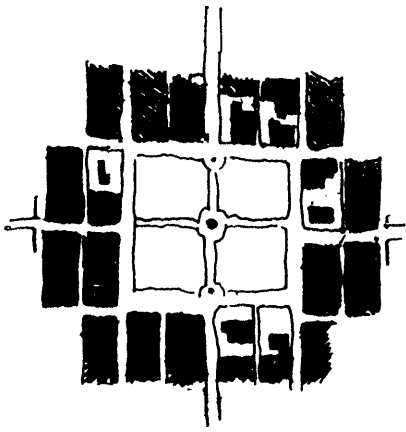
⁺St.Andrew is the parish immediately bordering Kingston to the North, and together with it forms the corporate metropolis of Kingston & St.Andrew.



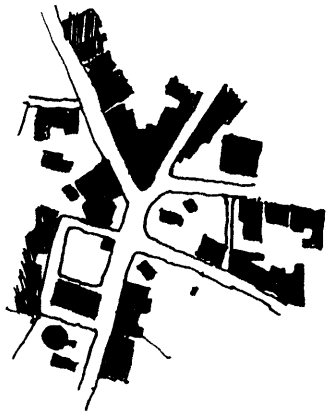
f 1.1.12 Kingston and its Suburbs, 1889.



f 1.1.13 Central Kingston, 1972.



PARADE



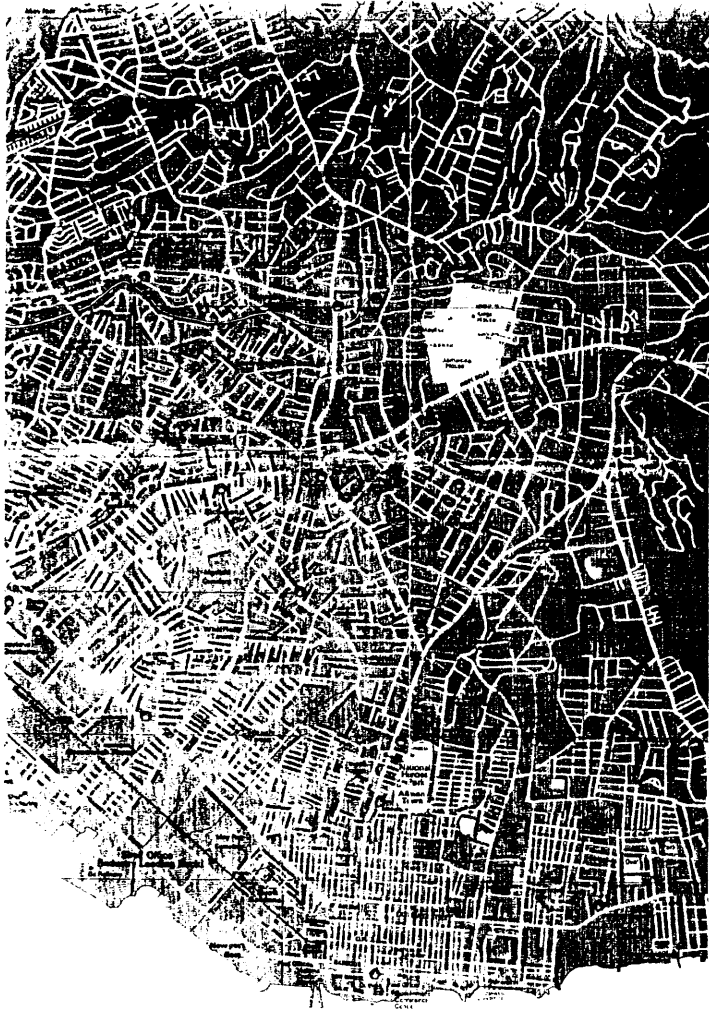
CROSS-ROADS



HALF-WAY-
TREE

apparent uniformity in direction or layout as multiple streets burst out of the grid to eat up the landscape. This is not surprising, since Goffe's plan was designed to have had limited dimensions, and did not lend itself to expansion beyond a certain point. The Parade can no longer be considered a centre in the classic sense, since it retains none of its former hierarchical dominance. It is more accurate to say that Kingston evolved pastorally, for the main streets go forth, almost willfully, negotiating hills and valleys along the way. They meet each other at various points, carving public space through time. The city has become one of multiple nuclei. The order is revealed: It is not singular, but plural.

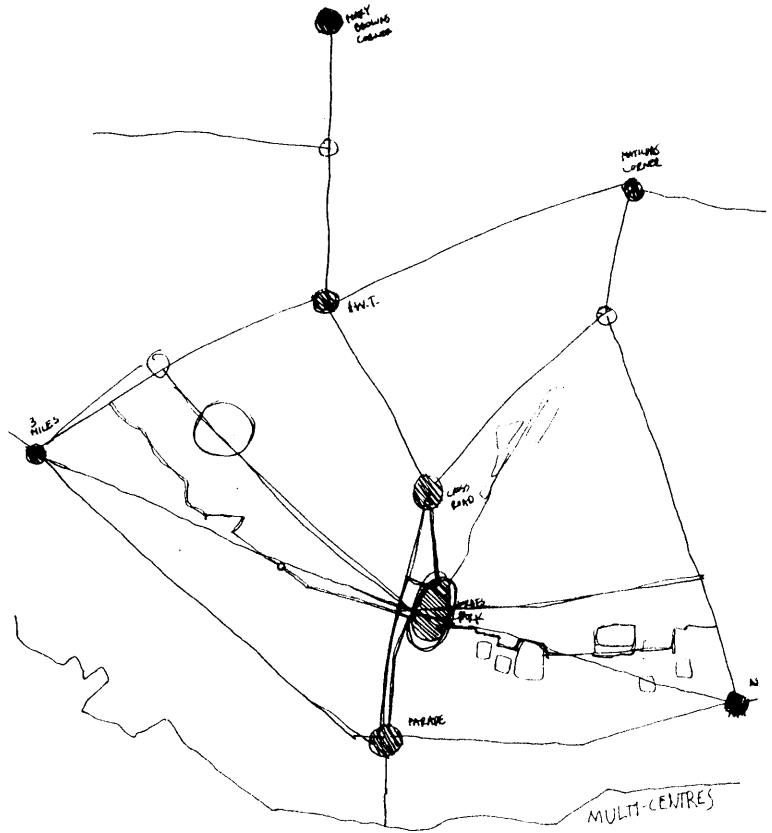
In the living net of roadways cast over the landscape, zones of intensity are created at the knot - at the intersection. The traveler must orient himself at the crossroads. It is only at these moments that he pauses for rest, reflection (and a drink of rum) before hurrying slap-dash toward another section of town. The road junction is thick with historical association, is imageable in the minds eye. The junction represents the character of that quarter for which it is the focus. In Kingston there are several such nodes, with names as colourful as the people who pass through them: Parade, Cross Roads, Half-Way-Tree, Matilda's Corner, Papine, for example. Some are mile markers, reminding the traveler of the distance he has yet to cover; some are the occasion to saunter through a garden of tropical flowers; some celebrate the transformation of the land itself, as at Papine, where the long Hope Road comes to rest before another takes its place, shooting up into the Blue Mountains. Their 'boundaries' - their architecture -are often accidental, occurring at the points of least resistance to the crossing roads. They are built up,



Kingston Harbour



f1.1.15 Map of Kingston and St. Andrew, 1987.



f1.1.16 Analytic Sketch Showing Network of Intersections.

adjusted, and decorated anonymously over time. They are places of many and varied - in short, plural- encounters.

Modern Kingston, the place of myth and reality, is also plural in the sense that it simultaneously unites and divides. In analysis, author Katrin Norris is less sympathetic than Higman: "Jamaica is two nations , sharing the same space, but hardly touching each other", she writes⁵. For her, social polarization, begun in colonialism, and seen on the plantation, has survived through independence. The classes do not "converge" at all. She identifies the irony of a unified propaganda: that as the new nation seeks to assert its individuality through profession of a unique hybrid society, it allows itself to duplicate the socio-economic practices of its former overlords, which is separatist by design. "The more pleasant frontages of the city", she continues, "seem to hide a mass of humanity living in dense conditions of squalor". One need not view Kingston through a microscope before realizing this truth. In downtown, modern towers of shimmering plate glass stand in stark contrast to the decaying tenements around its base; well-kept suburban homes seem like hotels and palaces compared with the zinc-aluminium shantys clustered along the route; BMW's whizz by slow-moving donkey carts on a daily basis.

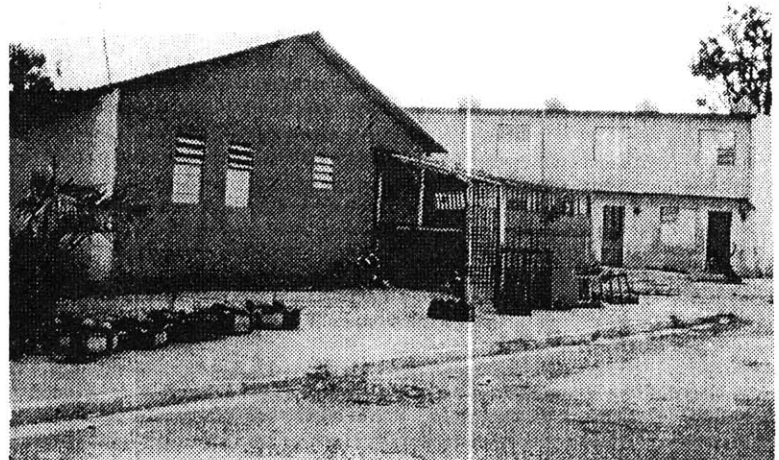
They are all symptoms of what I will call 'Third World' modernism. Marshall Berman explains that developing countries build modernity upon a "fantasy" of modernism which is observed in advanced nations, rather than on modern realities internal to their own societies⁶. This entails, among other things, the observance of norms of comfort and leisure practiced by the middle classes in America, and not far removed from the

⁵In *Jamaica - The Search For an Identity*, p 42.

⁶In *All That is Solid Melts Into Air*, p 232.



f 1.1.17 House, Kingston.



f 1.1.18 House, Kingston.



f 1.1.19 Jamaica's Coat-Of-Arms, expressing the National Motto.

aristocratic lifestyles of the former planter class in the colonies. Civic life is thrust out in favour of private pursuits. Community action is sacrificed to individual gain. Citizens lose identification with each other and thus with their common destiny. The shopping malls and plazas littering Kingston are fast becoming the space for gathering, but they alone cannot serve the public life, since they are places for consumption, and as such automatically eliminates one income group from the picture. They are the embodiment of an international, non-specific pattern of behaviour, having little to do with regional or local culture. In Jamaica the schism of caste distinction is immediately apparent and pervasive, and it is tragic, since as a developing nation, she can scarcely afford for this to happen. The nation, the city, may as well grind to a halt if it is willing to always separate itself.

By that same token however, Kingston has proved both the appraisals of Higman and Norris, and, in Berman's own words, shown itself to be uniquely modern: He later marvels that the "truncated" modernism of underdevelopment, because of the extreme social, political, and spiritual/religious pressures under which it grows infuse it with an "incandescence" which the relaxed modernism of the First World "can rarely hope to match". This approaches the comment of a Jamaican movie director: "The Jamaican consciousness is just burning out of sight. Its history is African. Its culture is European. Its politics, Third World. We're producing a totally new breed of human being"⁷. The new Jamaicans must be motivated to put this energy into collective work, realizing that the advancement of the society depends on individual discipline and effort, and not the other way around. They must again be

⁷Quoted in the APA guide book, Jamaica, p 79.



f 1.1.20 King Street, Kingston, today.



f 1.1.21 Church and Vendors, Kingston.

made proud of their history, for this reminds them that there is something to lose in the tidal wave of internationalism - it gives them something which is worth fighting for. To reiterate, the *aspiration* to modernity and international standards is itself ambitious and forward-thinking, but becomes detrimental to the developing country when it involves a sacrifice of regional culture and resources. Or, in the lyrics of another Bob Marley tune, which, in true form of Rastafarian* egotism, solicits a defiant self-pride: "...Children, get your culture, and don't stay there and jester!..". Show them this reference point, this common ground. It is the innate knowledge of each others share in the Jamaican experience, which has kept them together, and will push them forward.

Finally, The future of Kingston, the "collage city", rests in Colin Rowe's presentation of the new city as an amalgamation of traditional and modern planning. "We have two models", he writes. "Wishing to surrender neither, we wish to qualify both...Allow for the joint existence of the overtly planned and the genuinely unplanned, of the set-piece and the accident, of the public and the private, of the state and the individual. It is a condition of alerted equilibrium which is envisaged...Cross-breeding, assimilation, challenge, imposition, superimposition, conciliation: these might be given any number of names..."

I prefer to call it...intersection.

*Millenial cult, having its roots in Jamaica, which professes the divinity of H.I.M. Haile Selassie I (1891-1975), last Emperor of Ethiopia. His christened name was Ras Tafari, the *Ras* being a noble title roughly equivalent to Duke.

The shame of National Heroes Park

● Now a haven for idlers, squatters, lovers and rapists

By Gary Spaulding

THE National Heroes Park, Heroes Circle, was designated and reserved to inter the remains of great contributors to the nation but for some time now the park has been serving a multiplicity of other purposes.

It has become a haven for idlers, a home for squatters, a playing field for youngsters, short-

cut for pedestrians, rendezvous for lovers and the locus for robberies and rapes.

A number of the tombs of great Jamaicans are in need of repairs. That of Donald Sangster, the nation's second Prime Minister, is high on the list.

When the *Gleaner* visited the park on Monday, the area was parched and barren. When the Little Theatre Movement honoured Ranny Williams Saturday with a ceremony at his tomb, the organis-

ers had to order flowers to give some respectability to the place.

A few women, who said they were employed to "take up the place," were doing just that; but much more than raking was needed.

One of the workers, referring to the tomb of Mr. Sangster, exclaimed "Dem no see it waan fix an' paint!" She noted that the inscribed words "Prime Minister" needed to be re-inscribed as they had faded. Tiles were loosened, the

inscribed words were no longer legible and the tomb itself was a filthy mess, with broken bottles and other debris on it.

Headstones have not been placed on the tombs of Mallica "Kapo" Reynolds, internationally famous sculptor and renowned revivalist; and Ken Hill, trade unionist, journalist and politician, who both died in 1989.

The front of the park has become a squatter settlement. "Dem live, dem sleep, dem do every ting

ova dey," one worker explained. "Dem even bathe, naked in a broad day light."

Men, with what seemed to be their "belongings", were fast asleep under the shade of trees when the *Gleaner* ventured to that section of the park. The worker said that the gates to the park were closed in the evenings but people still "scaled" the fence.

The area that encircles the shrines of the National Heroes is well kept. The plants and flowers are well tended. But who could tell that this is the National Heroes Park? There is no identifying sign.

f1.2.1 Article in the *Daily Gleaner* (Kingston)

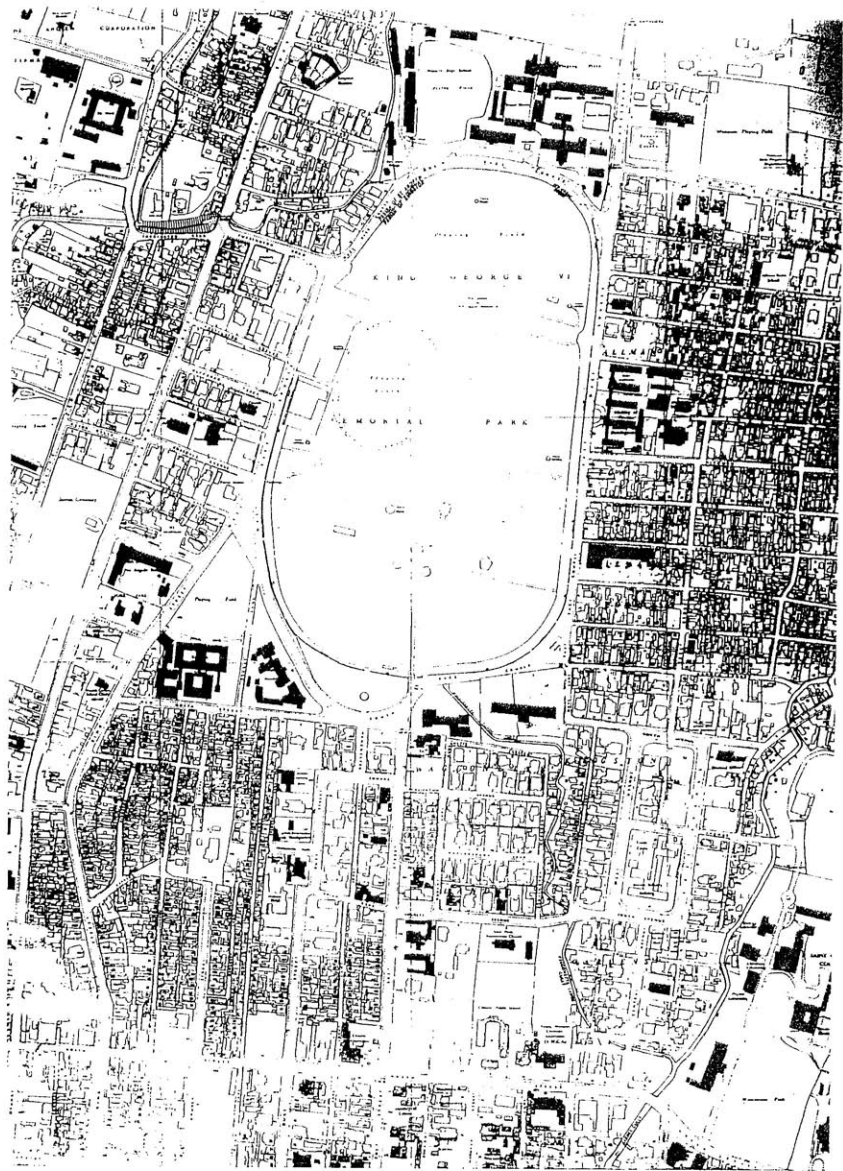
The Park as Public Place

Place and space are distinguished thus: a *place* is a memorable location, containing some aspect or aspects which identifies it as being unique, separating it from its surroundings by visual or other sensual perception. A *space* on the other hand, is simply an actual or implied enclosure, like the hole in a donut, or the horizon yonder.

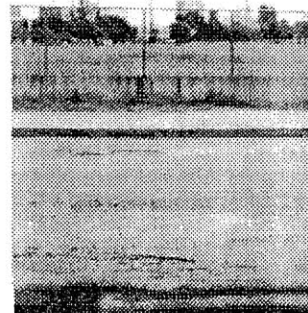
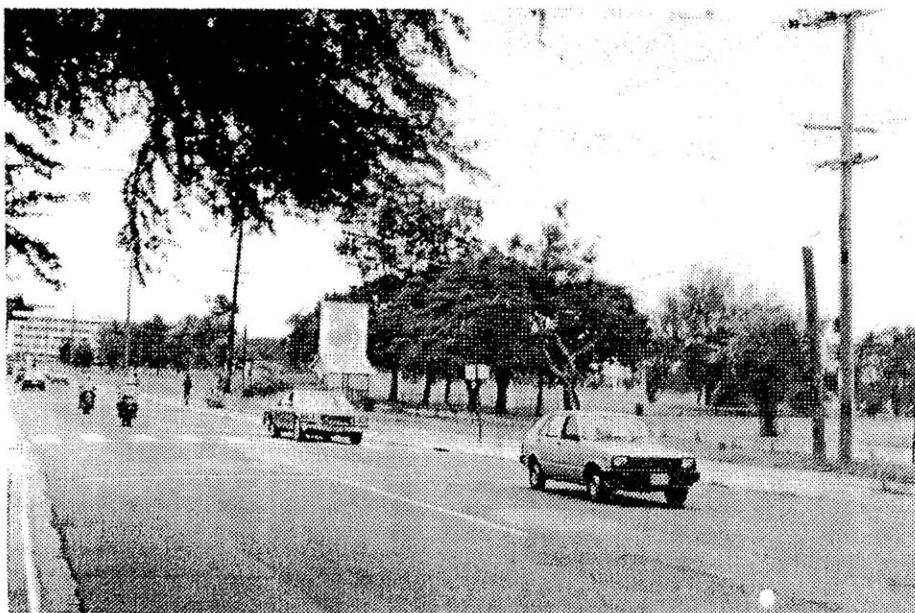
The Caribbean, Jamaica, Kingston, Heroes' Park, by the definition above, are places. But the designation of 'park' is a misnomer, since it stops short of fulfilling its purpose: to provide a place of public respite, a retreat of sorts for the citizen to use, enjoy, and remember. For all its place-like qualities, it fails to evoke a *sense* of place. Dunham-Jones goes further to say that in the experience and apprehension of a place by humans, "...its objective description becomes layered with multiple subjective memories and associations through which it becomes meaningful. Sense of place is strongest in those places which are endowed both with distinctive physical features and with significant cultural meaning and memories".⁸ It is this quality of 'not yet being' - of not yet drawing such association - that is fascinating about the site, because it should not be so. Furthermore, the park as an urban element, in its isolation from the public, parallels the condition of Jamaican society which I choose to address: that is, the rigid demarcations of class structure and the subsequent lack of common ground on which to meet as a people.

It should not be so because at different times, the park seemed to have been so endowed. It marks two important boundaries in the city: one physical, the other, socio-political. Its southern tip brushes the dense

⁸From course notes, Architecture, Place, and Contemporary Culture.



f1.2.2 Plan of Park Area, today.



f1.2.3 View South on West Heroes' Circle.

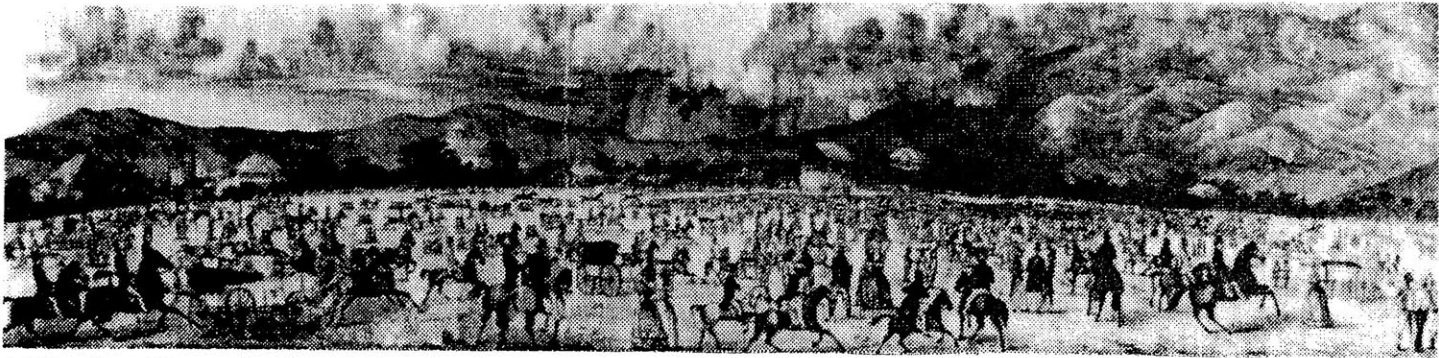
urban fabric denoting the edge of the old city of Kingston, which is now referred to as 'downtown'. Its northern fringe meanwhile, coincides with the original 'dividing' line of Kingston and its suburban counterpart, the parish of St. Andrew. While this inadequately describes the mercurial quality of both physical entities, it is otherwise significant. To the motorist heading south with some degree of speed on its western tangent, The sudden expanse of the park frames his vision of old Kingston, allowing him to experience its facade, and reminding him of the imminent approach of its confines. To the architect in search of a narrative, The physicality of the park presents a myriad of associations with the urban/suburban, disadvantaged/privileged, public/private dialectic. It is an intermediate zone, resting, as Olive Senior has written, between "the psychologically and economically exclusive areas of 'uptown' and 'downtown'." It is not quite inside or outside the city, but a combination of the two, as a front porch or verandah would be to a house. Like a verandah, it is disappointing when one walks up to find it silent and deserted.



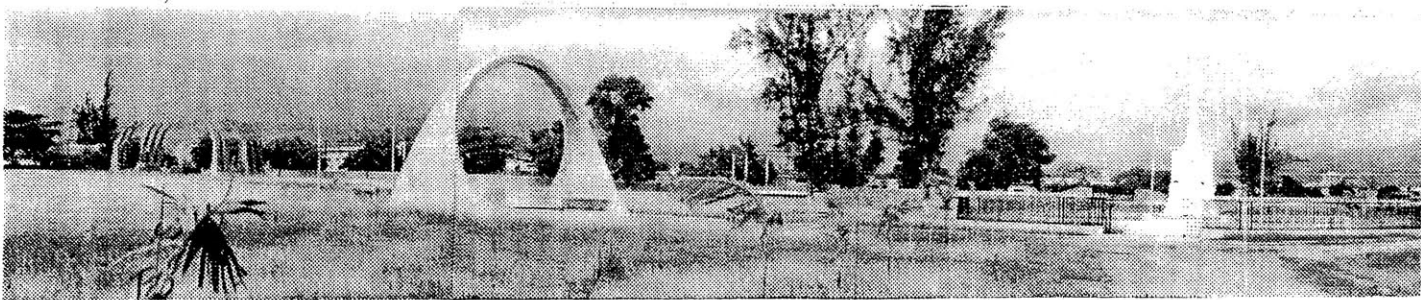
f 1.2.4 View of Park from Wolmer's Boys' School.

It should not be so because the air around the Park once bristled with excitement. Great crowds spilled over its edges in 1804 when it was inaugurated as the Kingston Race Course, and every race day since. As with so many places of memory, legends persist: of a mysterious *obeah* (voodoo) woman who lived on its perimeter and could, as she fancied, help or hurt ones chances of winning; of a con artist who once 'sold' the race-course to an unsuspecting buffoon.

Racing was at first an annual event, but the park's prodigious acreage offered opportunities for all manner of gatherings throughout the year.



f1.2.5 View of Kingston Race Course, 1804.



f1.2.6 View of National Heroes' Park, 1994.



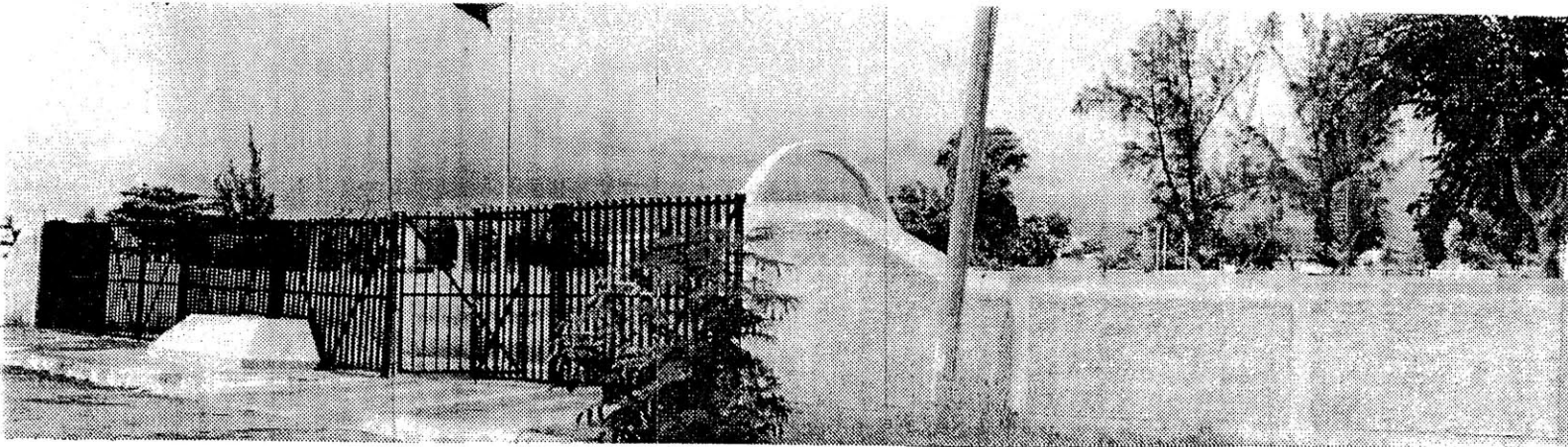
Circuses, fairs, and expositions could find ample room to present themselves to the City. The removal of horse-racing to a new location in the 1950's did not deter constant public use of the space: the park supported the premier sports field in the Kingston area, if not the entire island, until the National Stadium was constructed in 1961. In times of national emergency, as after the great earthquake of 1907, it served as a tent city for the victims rendered homeless. Beyond that, it was transformed into a public garden and cemented within the national consciousness when the decision was made at Independence to turn it into a shrine for the memory of Jamaica's National Heroes.



This was in fact a watershed event in the life of the park, for, paradoxically, with its new role as national monument came the blind removal (the new facilities at the Stadium quickly sucked away that aspect of the park's importance to the city) of the amenities which made it desirable for public use. It seems as if the park was to be restored to a state of pristine grandeur, something to be looked at rather than used. Regardless of its many prior transformations, it had always retained a link to the surrounding communities through popular activities, ranging from the Sunday stroll to the giant town meeting which took place there intermittently. Now, following the haphazard removal of each to specialized areas around town, the park lost much of its vibrance. In addition, the sixties saw the ringing of the park with modern government buildings, acquiring for it a stiffness and formality which belied its relationship with the city, which, as we have seen from historical maps, was in no way planned to formally connect. So, unlike the integrity of the Mall with L'Enfants Washington, D.C., Kingston's Heroes' Park as *Plaza Major* was an imagined construction. The planting of monuments to the



f1.2.7 Monument and Facade.

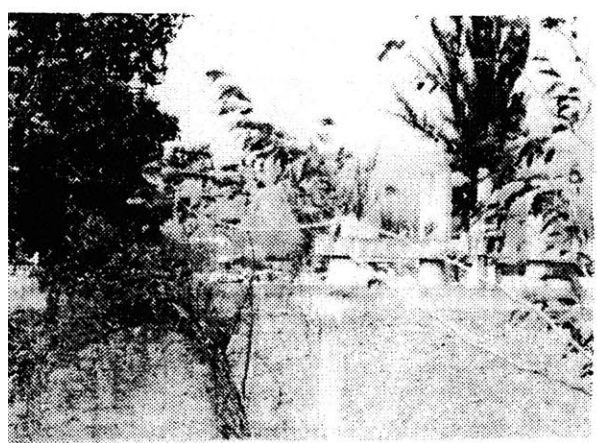


f1.2.8 Monuments Over Wall, from left: Bogle and Gordon, Bustamante, Manley.

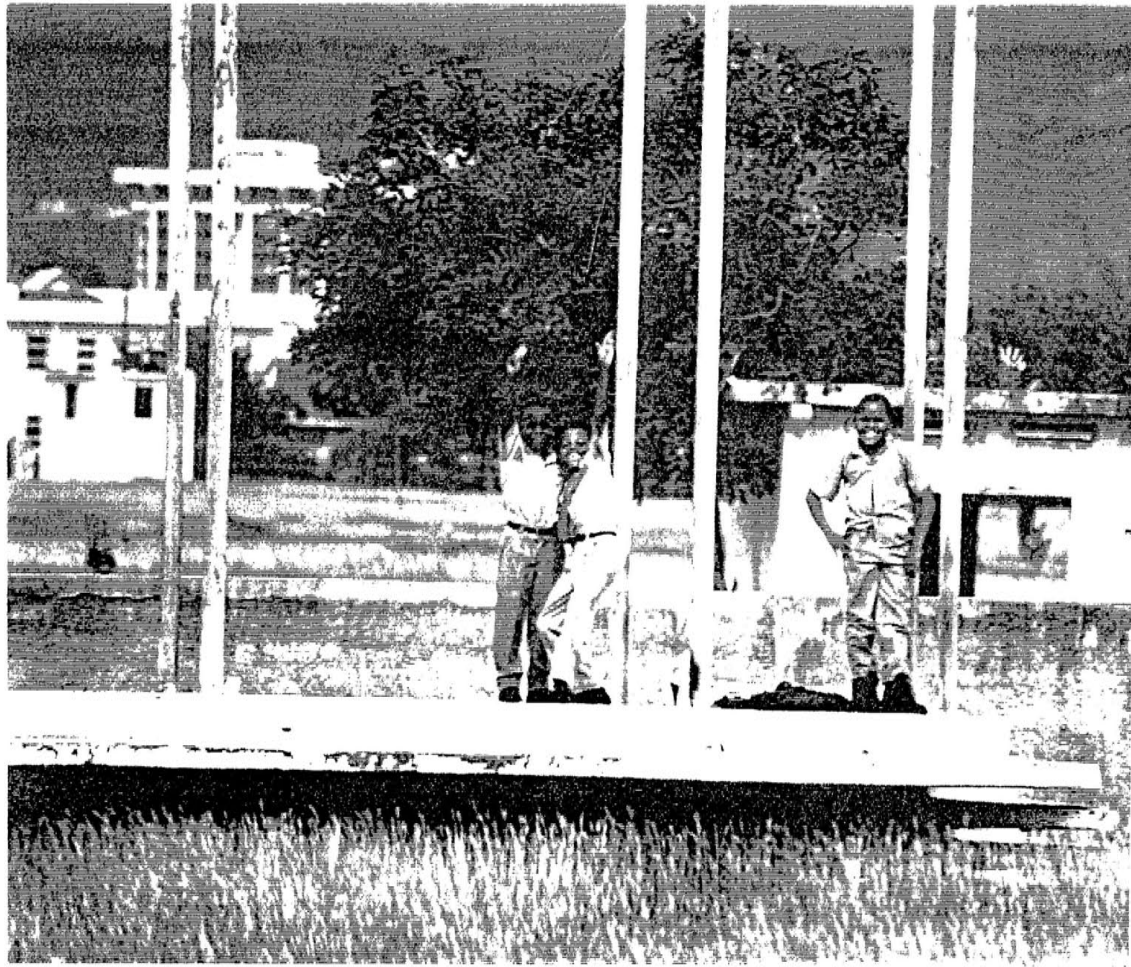
Heroes in a line at the southern sector was a weak gesture of territorialization, and is not yet powerful enough to provoke the kind of life envisioned by the Government and planners of the park. It became but a national symbol, which, as is sometimes the unfortunate case with those, a shadow of the reality for which it stands. More recently, the monuments were walled off and gated for, it is often defended, their own protection. The complete impotence of such a move is made even more poignant by the emptiness of the sixty-five or so other acres from which the public has, not altogether mysteriously, vanished.

However, Norberg-Schulz, pointing to the reciprocity of public place to public life, says that public place can begin to stitch these fragments together, to keep society bound in some coherent whole. It may be able to accomplish for public life what the public has neglected to make happen itself. After all, the park has resisted the developer's bulldozer and the squatter's hut only because it remains a vague part of cultural memory, and, just maybe, it is more sacred than people will admit. It endures, and that says something, since so much of the old Jamaica has disappeared. He writes: "The concept of place has two meanings: *place of action*, and *point of departure*. Hence it represents *what is known* and what permits man to depart towards a more distant goal. Only when the individual possesses such a point, or system of points, of reference, he may act in a meaningful way"⁹.

The fact is that here is the opportune place for 'place' in Jamaica. Heroes Park is such a point of reference, needing only to be intensified to be perceived by the individual and collectively, by the nation. The layers of



⁹Christian Norberg - Schulz, Architecture, Meaning and Place, p.30.



f 1.2.9 After School.



history, the making of a culture - "what is known" - now dormant, must be excavated. Its experience, and with it the Jamaican milieu, must be remembered. To be the "place of action and departure" for the people, it must bridge the social impasse and be accessible to all. Its use through the years by Jamaicans legitimizes its continued function as public space; its presence, the grim reminder of the folly of segregation. Its unkempt grasses and shade trees, oblivious to the sadness of the park, still burst in colour after the rainy season, and beckon to the weary traveler. The proud monuments - to Bustamante and the Heroes of 1865 - peek out from their concrete prison, giving all a pause; perhaps the sudden hint of exhilaration which comes with the realization of belonging to a young nation with so much promise; and maybe the wistful awareness of the work left undone to achieve it.

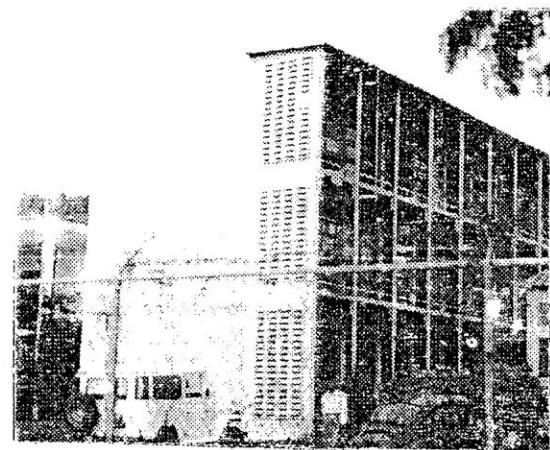
And, if at long last one enters its domain, to perhaps sit for a while and look around, the city, the formidable mountain range which is the spine of the island, the sky and sea, vehicles and people bustling to and fro in a faint hum, are displayed like a strange and wonderful movie of unpredictable ending. The site, in many ways, *is* Jamaica, and undoubtedly, the place for her rendezvous.



f 2.1.1 Walls- A West Kingston Street.



f 2.1.2 Courtyard - Jamaica House (Office of the Prime Minister), St. Andrew.



f 2.1.3 Fence - Ministry of Agriculture, St. Andrew.

II. *PROJECT*

*"And verily, verily, I'm saying unto the I,
I - nite oneself, and love I - manity;
'Cause puss and dog, they get together,
what's wrong with loving one another;
Puss and dog, dem get together,
what's wrong with you my brother?
Ah so Jah seh.."*

Robert Nesta Marley

The Space of Pluralism

The aim therefore, is to extend, rather than contain. Kingston/St.Andrew, the urban dynamo, has defied control since its inception, and has grown beyond the wildest dreams (or nightmares, depending on one's outlook) of planners and residents. The citizen's defense mechanism has been introverted activity, closing the yards of their homes and businesses off from public view and access with an architecture of walls, spikes and grills. As an alternative to the false security of partitioning the city, which produces further areas of alienation, isolation and danger, I propose an attitude of reconciliation, compromise and continuity.

The new public place of social interaction must mediate the chaotic, not create, if indeed it could, a rarefied area where the chaotic is non-existent. I advocate the simultaneity of the storefront and sky-juice cart, of the wayward goat and pedigree dog, of money- football and the Manning

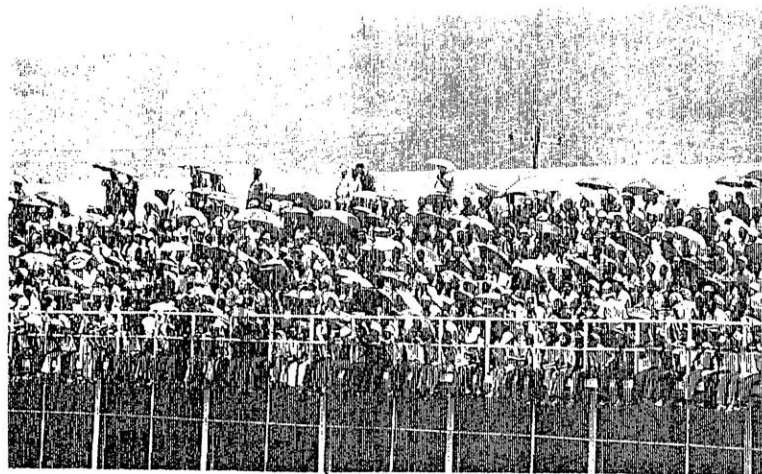




f2.1.4 Mobile Sound System.



f2.1.5 Public Life I - Carnival.



f2.1.6 Public Life II - Watching Cricket at Sabina Park, Kingston.

Cup.* Only this will have summarized the essence of Jamaican pluralism. The new public place must somehow draw public life, capture its vitality and richness in an instant, and lead it off again, to others like it elsewhere in the city. The Park is reconsidered as a place of linkage in the existing network, a transitory, yet memorable moment, valid only inasmuch as it serves the impulse of movement and the necessity for access through the city. The urban gesture then, is the purposeful articulation of the process which has never been allowed to take place in the dislocated site: that is, something akin to the meeting of multiple streets and the subsequent forming of place in the city. It is the mechanization of what we have observed to be a natural phenomena.

The new park functions, by extension, are designed for meetings at multiple levels, and are intended to charge the area with popular use. They are inspired as much by the Jamaican's adroitness in sport, and flair for the theatric, as by the history of the park as a sports ground, and reinforce that type of activity with a layering of new sporting venues. A jogging and riding course, football (soccer) field, running track, tennis courts, volleyball and basketball courts not only offer opportunities for informal gamesmanship, but are attractive to the cross-section of the public which prefers the fraternity of spectating at larger national events. The variety of court surfaces also mediate the different scales of park, block, sidewalk and building lot. The football green could double as an outdoor theater for public meetings, celebrations, and concerts, ultimately providing a space for the climax of yearly Carnival and Festival parades.

* Money-football is an informal one-on-one game played with change on desktops; the Manning Cup is the pinnacle of schoolboy soccer tournaments.

Jamaica, A Historical Portrait

'Jamaica feared that federalism could be 'a dog' independence. Nationalism did not result in support of the federation but rather served to bolster Jamaican loyalties and act against federation.'

With federation, ^{in 1962} it became clear that ^{the} peaceful and gradual stages ^{could be achieved without}

Jamaican leaders have been quick to give ^{status} to the nationalist movement:

- ① National Heroes
- ② encourage creative arts
- ③ abolish British Honors
- ④ Nationalization of Industry

p. 217

ann:

May 9, 1994

direction is more important than monuments but still create some more space for it more reflection of precedents house on SW edge design line routes

could be of itself or highlighting points of entry memory of sports/paths/roads - (laying) of track route

SPACE in mind

what role does this play
- default

common ground of conflict

competition - design initiative

promotional drive, imagery

* do inventory of official buildings and public areas
measurements of related bldgs.

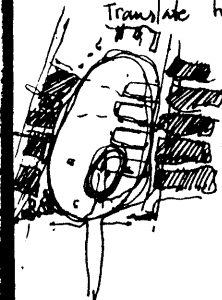
* program clear

* conversations, enquiries

June 14, 1994

The role of the thesis project is to create a place for the gathering of all Jamaicans and for the free exchange ~~and~~ of ideas between, and association with ~~the people~~

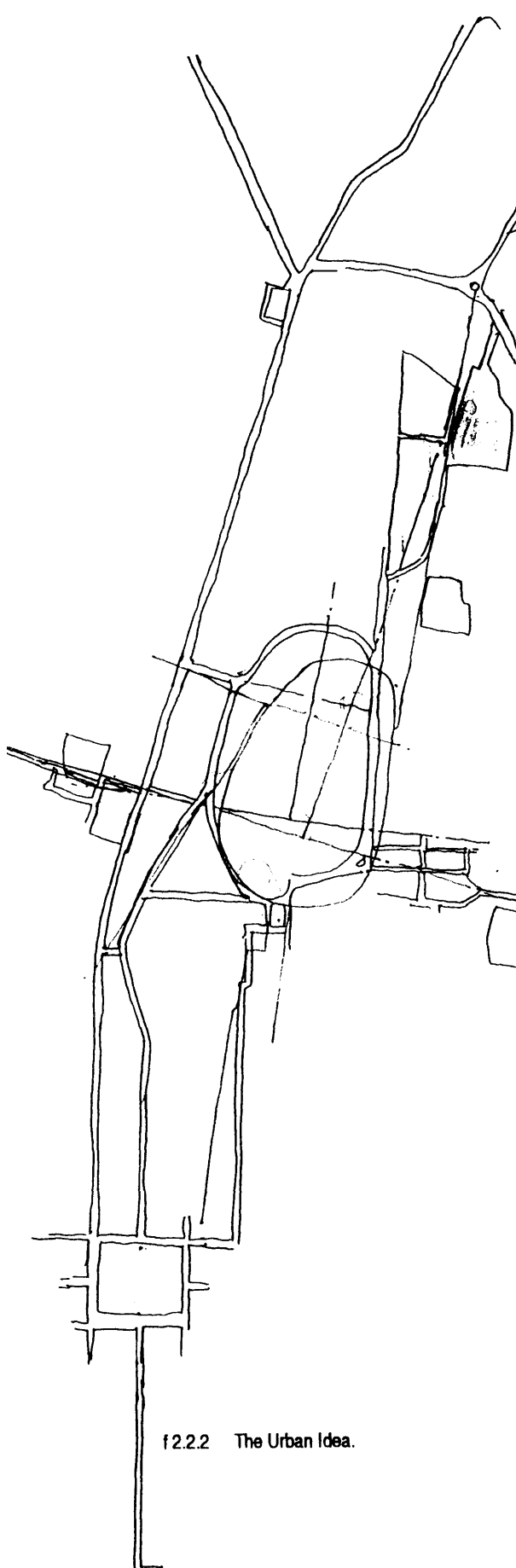
Translate to an idea about architecture/urbanism.



could conflict between classes/governing and governed be analogous to the conflict between urban grid and the 'free form' of the park

If dominant lines from these two geometries come together it may be resolved within the park/space at the point where they interlock:

Note Eisenman's reference to palimpsest (trace of the sites memories and ~~many~~ layers of history)



Completing the 'cultural infusion' of the park is a Museum of National Heritage, which, by virtue of its unique location in the new sports/cultural park, will encourage the concentration of exhibitions and scholarly information relating to Jamaican culture, history, and civics. It would provide the prime opportunity to house both the bureaus and galleries of the Institute of Jamaica, now in disparate locations across Kingston. This will allow more efficient administration of the Institute's vast reserves, and the more immediate access to them by the public.

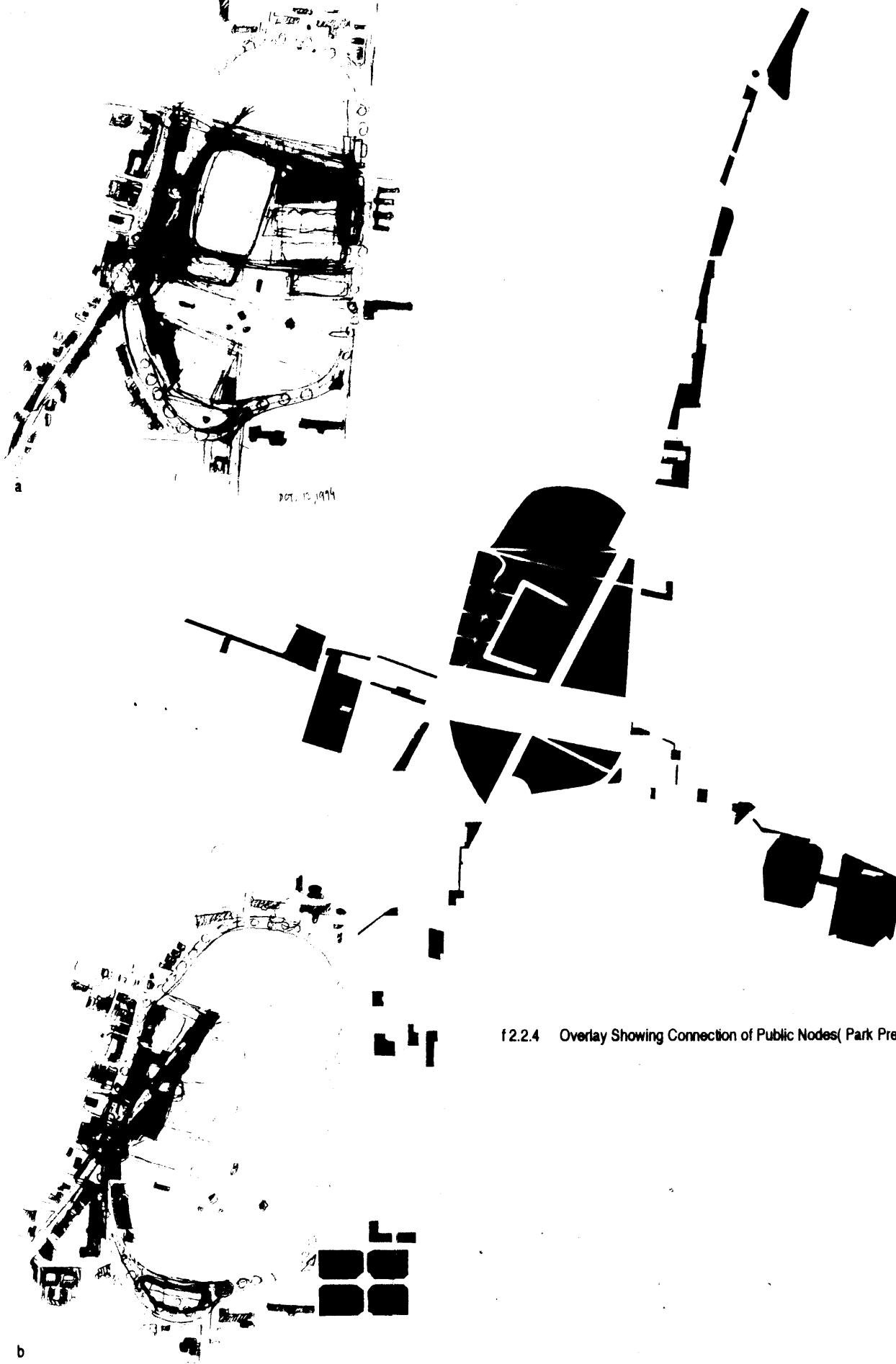
Urban Moves, or *One-One Cocoa...**

The relationship of the new functions to the city are established through the overlap of old and new ordering systems. The boundary of the park is seen no more as a divider, but as the place common to both park and city where activities of both are regulated - almost as a transparent medium through which refraction takes place. Therefore, the park begins a new presencing in the city outside of the oval perimeter. The city, or more accurately the city plan, is likewise the generator for formal movement through the park. The present edge of the park is softened, its boundary blurred, and people allowed to filter back and forth, thus changing its character as something unto itself and subsequently, the present apprehension of the space by the public.

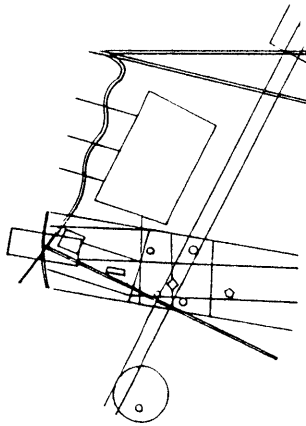
The precise strategy lies in a re-visitation of the present ordering system of the park: It consists of an East-West axis/path on which the National Monuments are placed, which intersects at its centre (site of the War

* The proverb "One-one cocoa full basket" means that every little bit eventually adds up.
 APR. 14, 1995

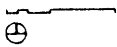
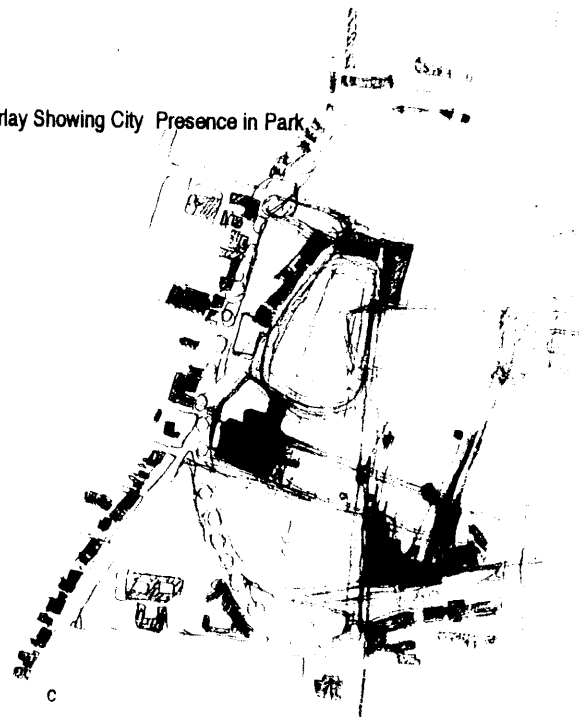


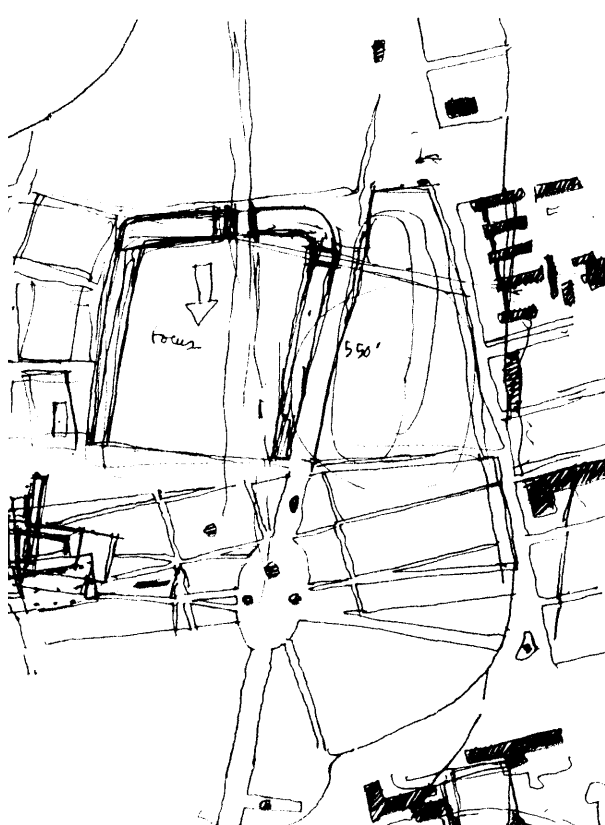


f2.2.4 Overlay Showing Connection of Public Nodes(Park Presence in City)



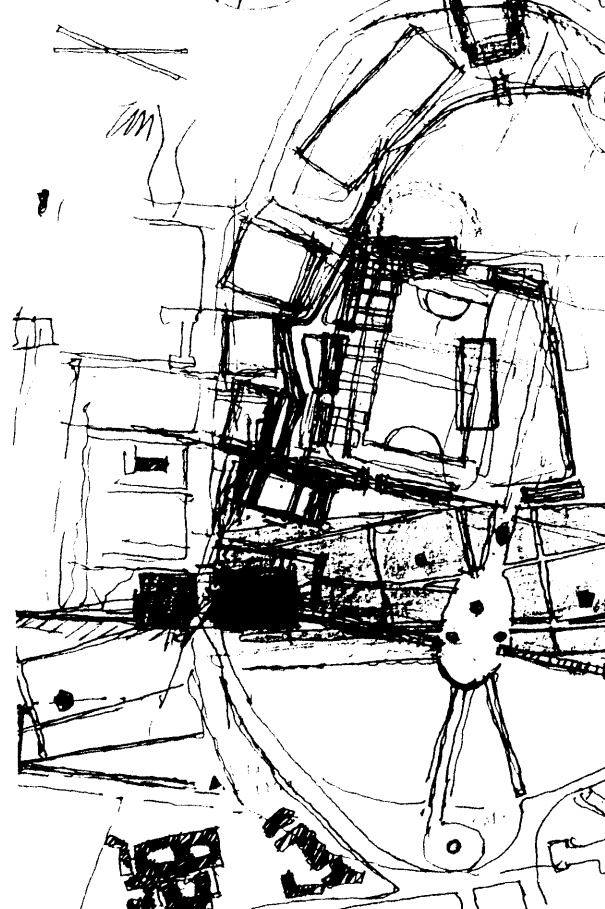
f2.2.6 Overlay Showing City Presence in Park



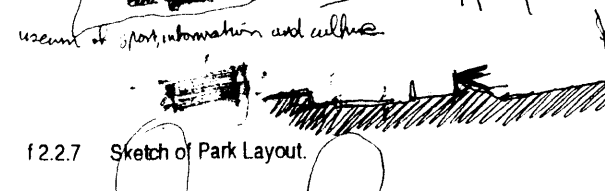


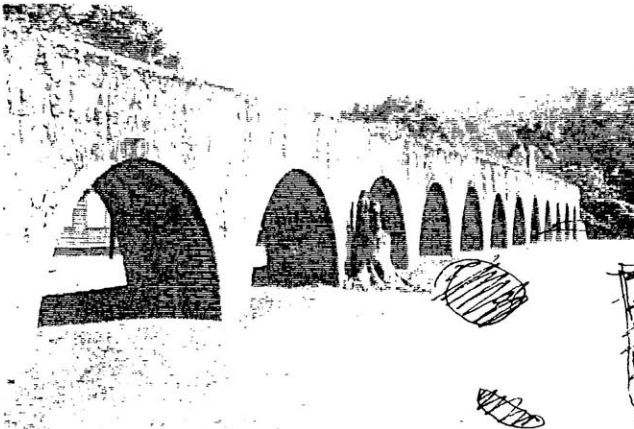
Memorial) with a North-South perpendicular. As indicated before, the design succeeds in nothing more than a local quartering of the park, and its screening of public activity. In light of the benign quality of the present relationship the logic of a formal connection is appropriated with much better service to itself: in a ruder intrusion through the urban fabric.

Skewing the geometry outside of itself achieves symbolic and practical ends: 1) By taking exception to the old order and freshly breaking its perimeter, the memory of the park enclosure is heightened. 2) Pedestrian activity is funneled along the axes from city to park, and vice-versa. 3) This activity creates the impetus for the reclamation of blighted lots with either new building or the formation of smaller urban parks/playgrounds along the route to the park.

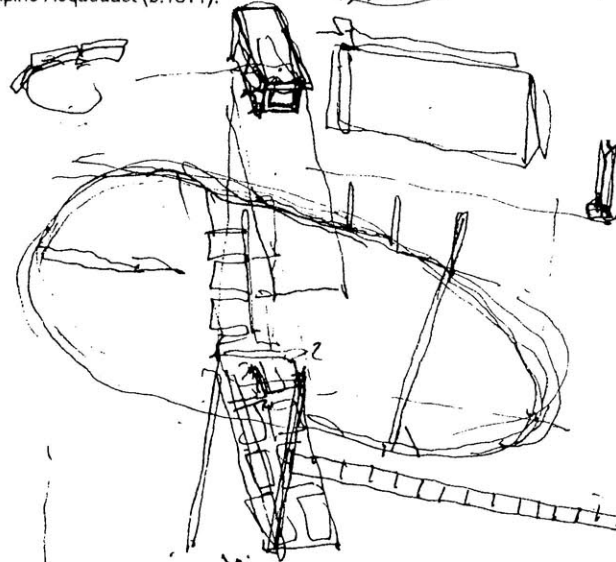
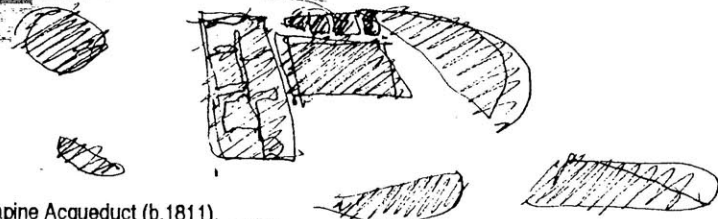


Where skew corresponds to the angle of incidence of King Street, formerly the city's main thoroughfare, with the park. King Street ties the Parade to the waterfront, and is still a hub of commercial and official activity, but loses its bearing - and thus its connective potential within the larger city - north of downtown, where it swerves to the right and comes to rest unceremoniously at the park perimeter. With the establishment of a directional orientation of the park, the old street recaptures some of its presence in the urban fabric and connects the park with the historical city center. The new path extends North of the park creating a public promenade through underused Water Commission lands upwards to the roundabout at Camp Road and Tom Reddam Avenue, cultural district of Kingston. In the West-East direction, continuing the axis of the monuments out into the city, a green belt joins existing public nodes such as Trench Town, the Jewish Cemetery, Emmet Park, Sabina Park





f 2.2.8 Ruins - A Section of the Hope-Mona-Papine Aqueduct (b.1811).



zones

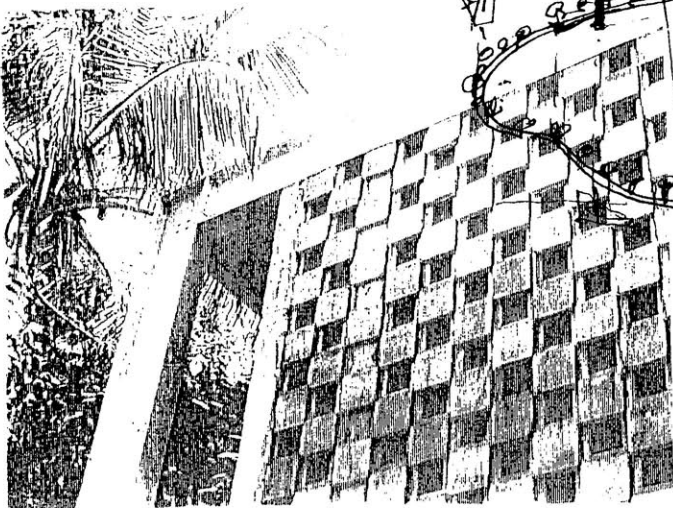
intersections -
nodes of activity

pathways

axes - lines

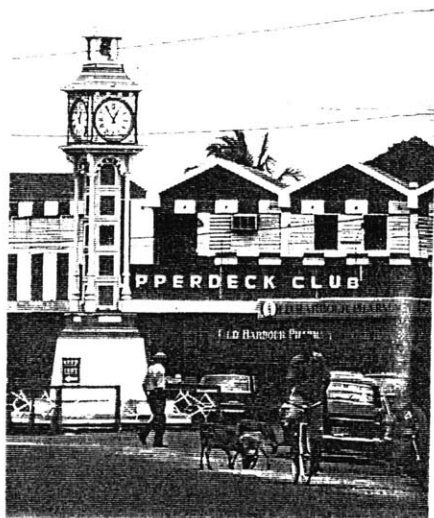
monuments

perimeter



f 2.2.9 Nature Meets Architecture - Cultural Training Centre, St.Andrew.

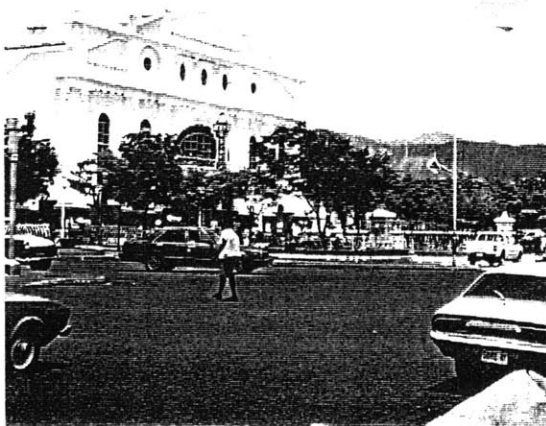
f 2.2.10 Layering of Activities.



f 2.2.11 Clock Tower, Old Harbour Square.



f 2.2.12 Colonnade, Port Antonio.



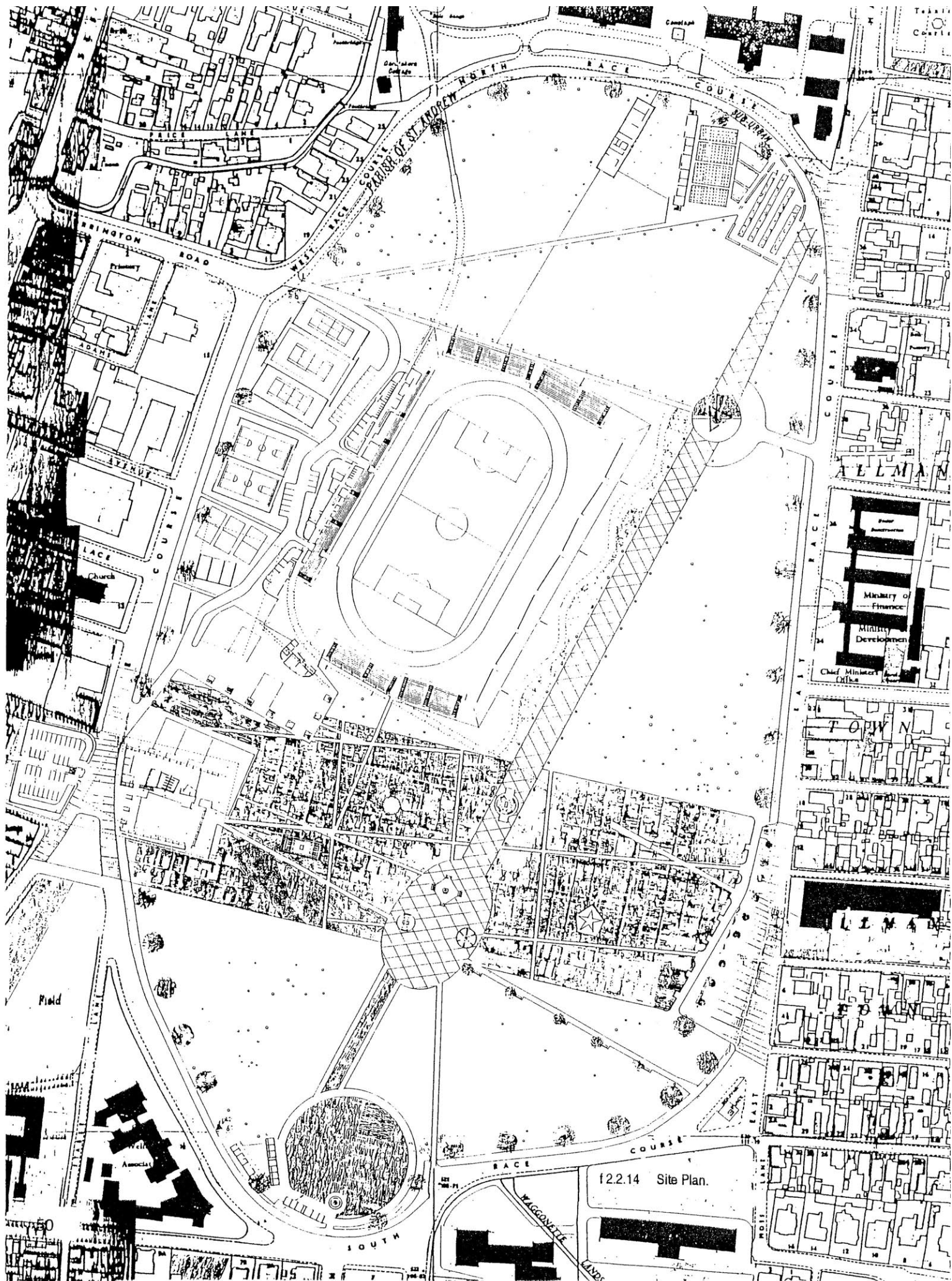
f 2.2.13 Facade - Ward Theatre, Kingston.

and finally the Alpha Institute. The dimension of the city grid (150'x350') is allowed into the zone of the monuments and is used to organise new formal gardens in a broad swath crossing the park. Thus, they are seen as belonging to the city. The potential would exist to create new monument sites within the new order.

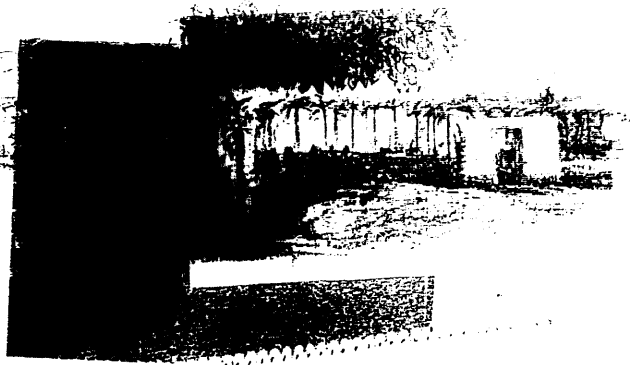
The skew and extension of the axes and their accidental meetings with the park's extant geometries in turn produce opportunities for new pockets of activity at the interface of park and city. These are populated with, to use Rowe's succinct term, "set pieces", which act as backdrop, evoke historical association, redefine the character of the park, and create for it the image it badly lacks. These are as follows:

Bleachers/Sports Area - placed with two sides common to both axes in the quarter previously inhabited by the old running/cycle track. Circulation is continuous along its perimeter, allowing filtration of larger crowds through its porous infrastructure from the street/park level and an elevated walkway. Ceremonial entryways align with two minor city streets, the grid of the new formal gardens, and the old axis toward Wolmer's School*. Lockers, showers and other support facilities at its western rim are wrapped in a curving wall which mimics the hard edge of the old Guinness boxing gym, itself grafted to the ghostly foundations of the race-course grandstand before it. Buffering the bleachers from the street are the ball courts and parking areas, accessed by the winding appendage to King St., the only vehicular path through the park.

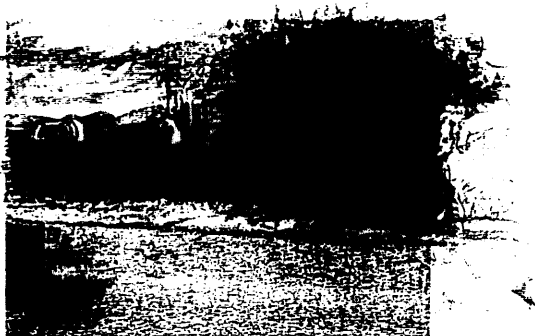
* One of the most prestigious secondary (high) schools in Jamaica, it was first established in 1729 for sons of gentry. Now comprising a girls' school, it has sat in its present location at the Park's north edge since the late 19th century.



f2.2.15 a, b, c & d Impressions.

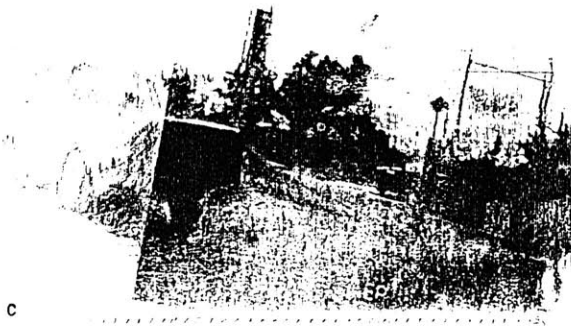


a



b

North Entrance - intersection of the new promenade with the park's northern curve (with which the erstwhile parish boundary of Kingston/St. Andrew is coincident). Its proximity to the Wolmer's campus suggests that a school-related activity make the transition to the park. An horticultural garden is proposed: students may engage in its planting and maintenance as a supplement to their biology curriculums. The operation recalls the historical land use of the Liguanea Plain for cultivation, and would ideally become an informational showpiece of tropical botany for the public at large.

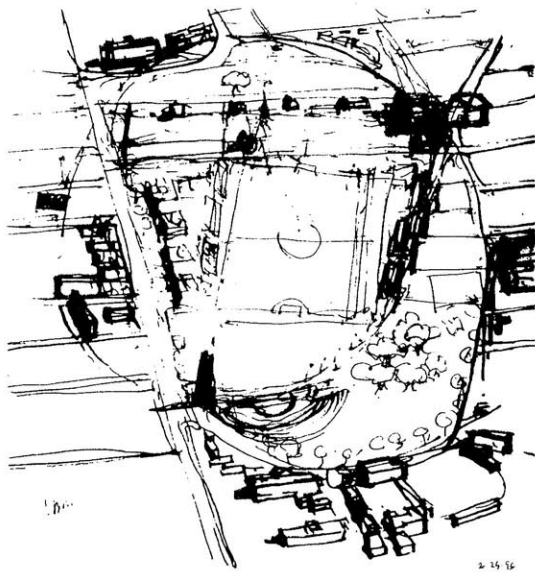


Old East Gate - a tower straddles the promenade to close the visual axis of Torrington Road. It is associated both with the lookouts perched above colonial Kingston for her defence and the iconic clock tower*, an inevitable and beloved feature of the Jamaican town square. In deference to the latter, the ground plane beneath it becomes the 'plate' for a sundial. The tower itself is the style, the shadow casting object. It will be an immediately recognizable marker for the place from any point in the city.

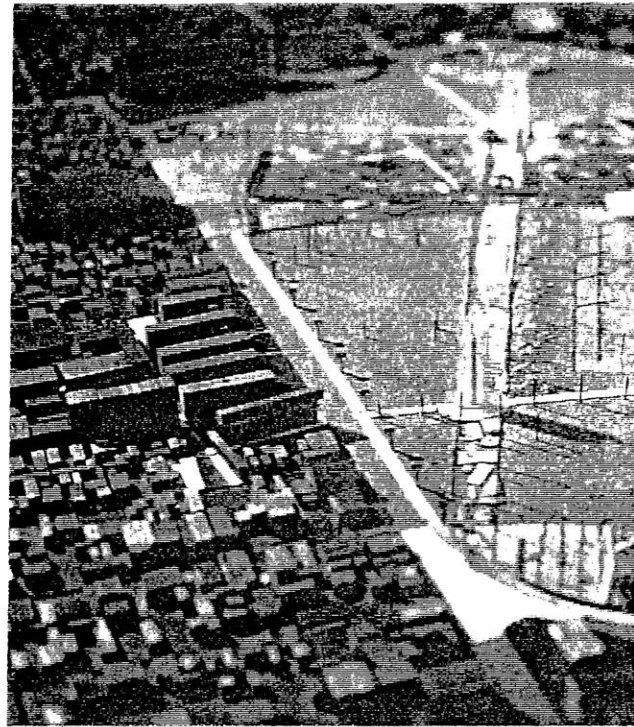


East Entrance - formal point of entry to the gardens from the city. Again, a porous, habitable wall alters its own perception from that of barrier to threshold. Options for the pedestrian are many: he or she might sit along its cool stone surface; buy refreshment from a vendor; or cross into the park via the extended city street or 'peopleduct', an elevated walkway which weaves through the site, offering the characteristic roof view at public events.

* The saying "Born under the clock" is a true Kingstonian's expression of pride at being born smack in the middle of town.



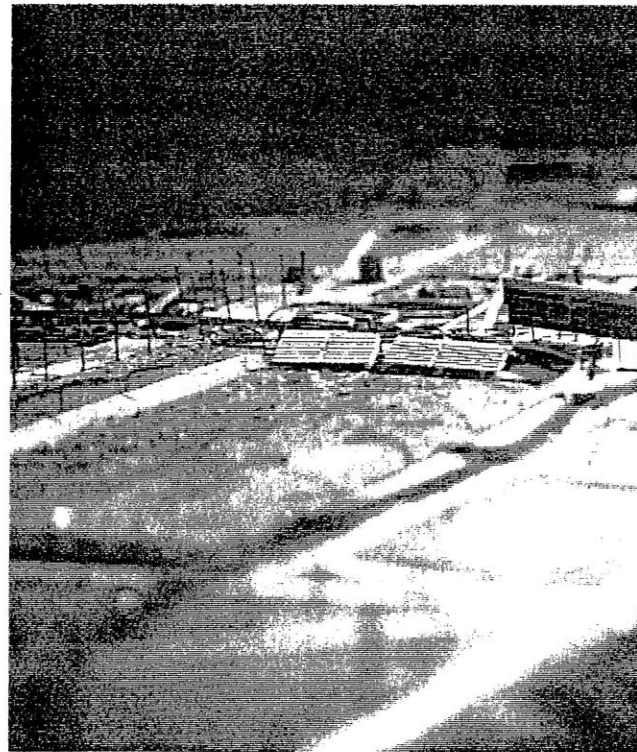
f2.2.16 Sketch.



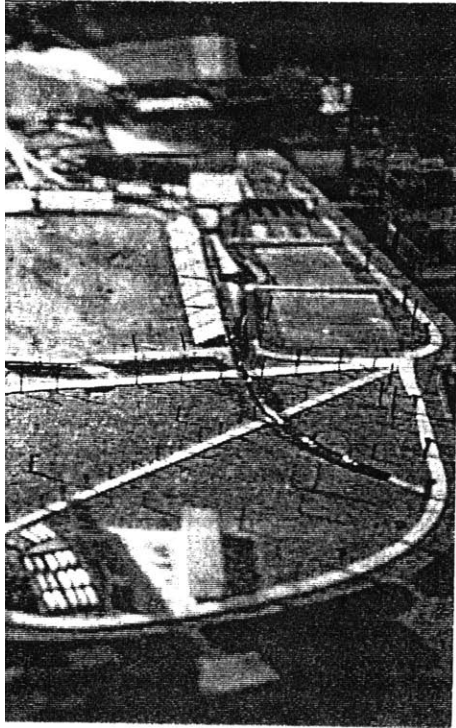
f2.2.17 Model View (South, towards Downtown).



f2.2.18 Sketch.

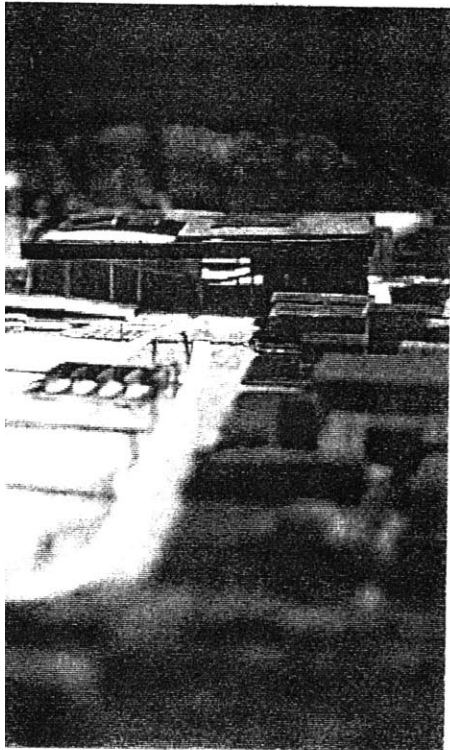


f2.2.19 Model View (South, from Torrington Road).

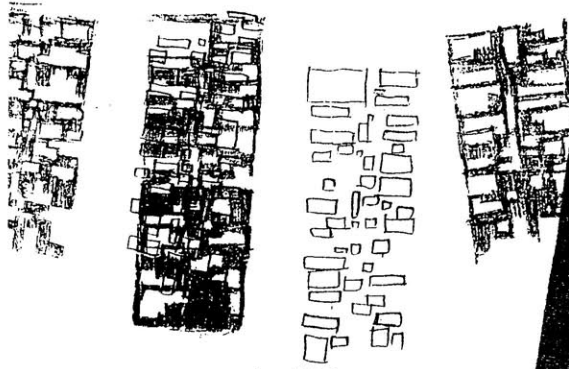


South Entrance - this existing patch is an anomaly of the park proper, acting like an appendage which pokes into the denser fabric of downtown. Its centerpiece is an aged fountain. There, a corral is defined by rough earth and bordered by stables and a riding path. This could be considered a starting point for horseback rides around the park, and even into the city itself. Thus, the park function would come full circle, intensifying association with the tree-lined perimeter where thoroughbreds once ran.

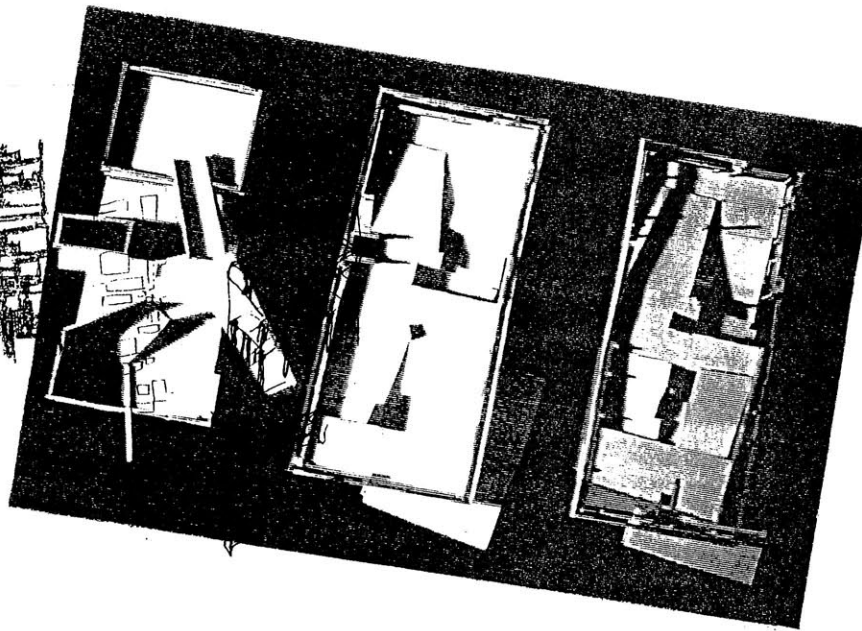
West Entrance - nucleus of the project, where King Street, the park perimeter and the axis of monuments converge, and the mixing point of vehicular and pedestrian traffic - thus the prime location for the main function space, the Heritage Museum. It is conceived as a regulating 'field', a container for the collision, and to some extent the choreography, of these various forces. An orthogonal grid of structural columns is chosen both for its brevity and flexibility in encompassing multi-functional space, but also is associated with its natural setting: It evokes the coolness of a grove of cultivated trees, an integral feature of the Jamaican landscape. To that end, the whole is shaded by an overextended horizontal - the roof of this 'forest'.



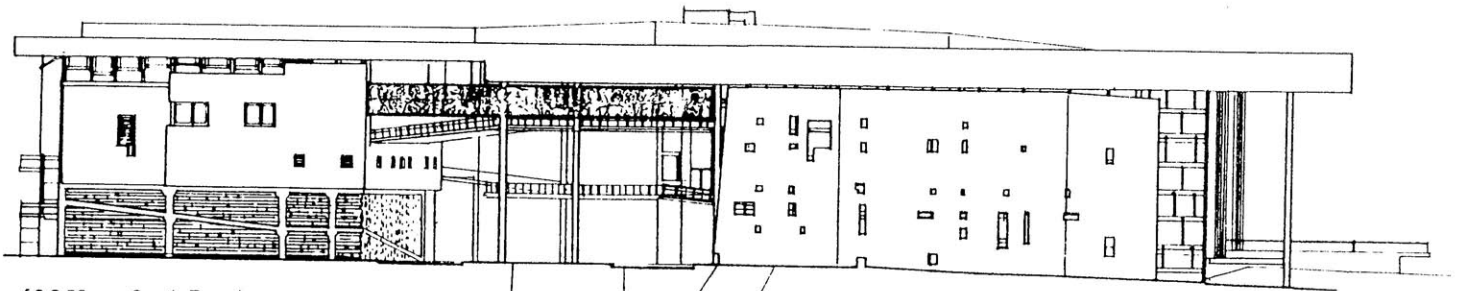
The rationality of the gridded plan is countered on the interior by shifting planes responding to the deluge of directional thrusts. While the structure is largely indifferent, the space within is active and energetic. The floors are not clearly separate, for the transition from outside through the building is made via a series of ramps and intermediate planes, which eventually soar beyond the park and over the street, continuing the journey on the other side.. The building 'cracks' down its centre, allowing vegetation and natural light to infiltrate.



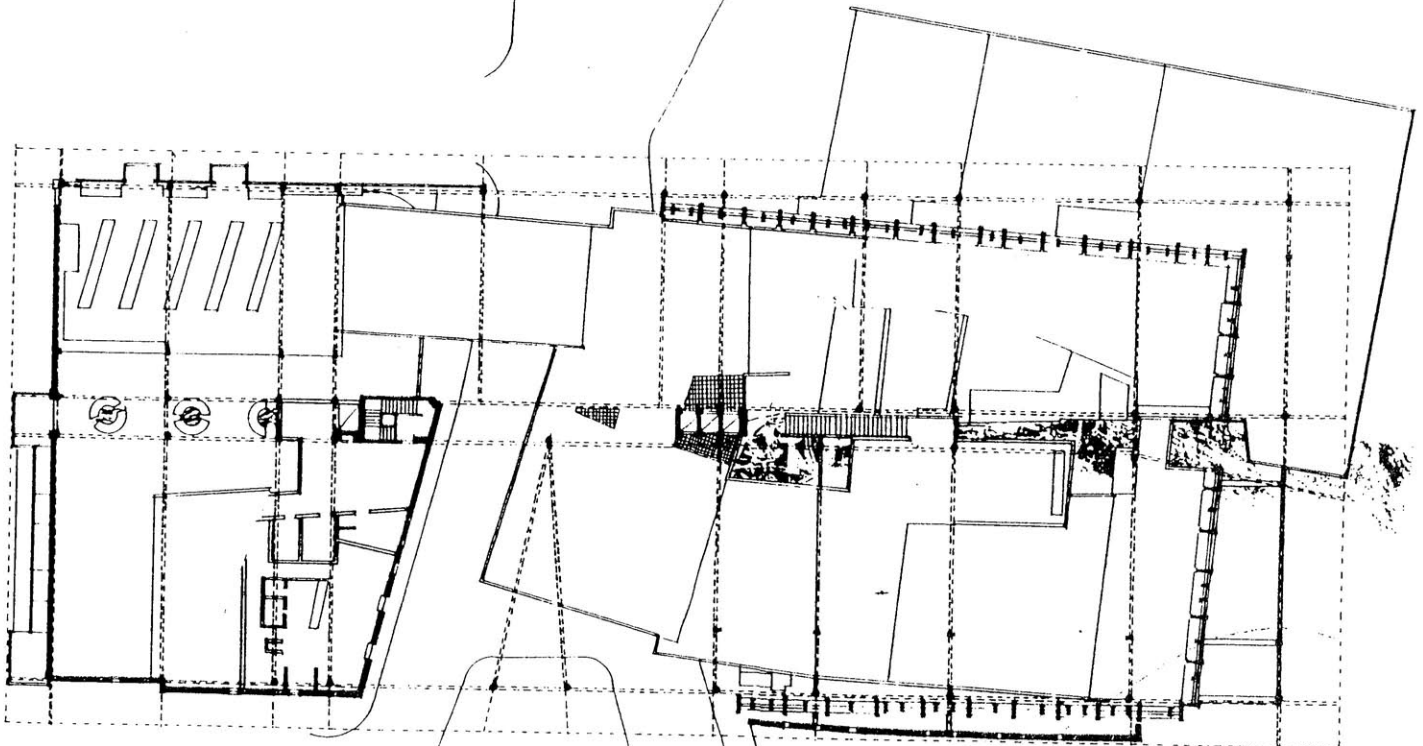
f2.2.20 Building Studies, sketches.



f2.2.21 Building Studies, models.



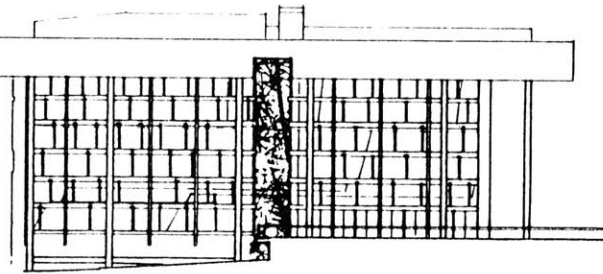
f2.2.22 a South Facade.



f2.2.23 Plan.

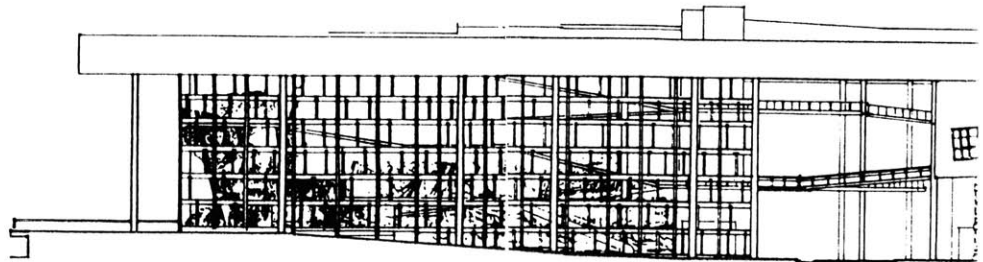
The planar quality of the facades enhances the notion of breaking barriers and crossing boundaries. They differ outwardly mainly to draw attention to the separate zones of the city which they front: on the North, to the park and suburb, it is softer and more pervious, made with screens and columns; to the South and the downtown is turned a tougher, more resilient face.

These are the first and last(ing) impressions of the motorist or pedestrian, on their journeys to and fro the city and suburb, in and out of nature and artificiality. Inside, the facades are revealed for all their flatness, and the gravity of the scene outside descends, as only one who has had the privilege of a backstage tour can appreciate. Outside, there are so many people different from ourselves, tossed together in a marvelous mix of colour, but barely mindful of one another, too busy to notice; moving amongst, but not with, the next man.



f 2.2.22 b East Facade.

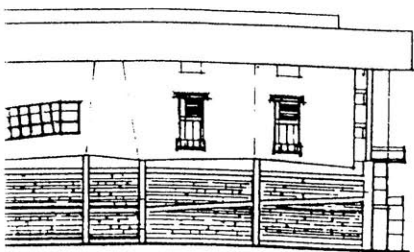
Inside, there are only people like us, come to learn a little bit more about Jamaica, about each other, meeting under a giant beam of sunlight, in the park.

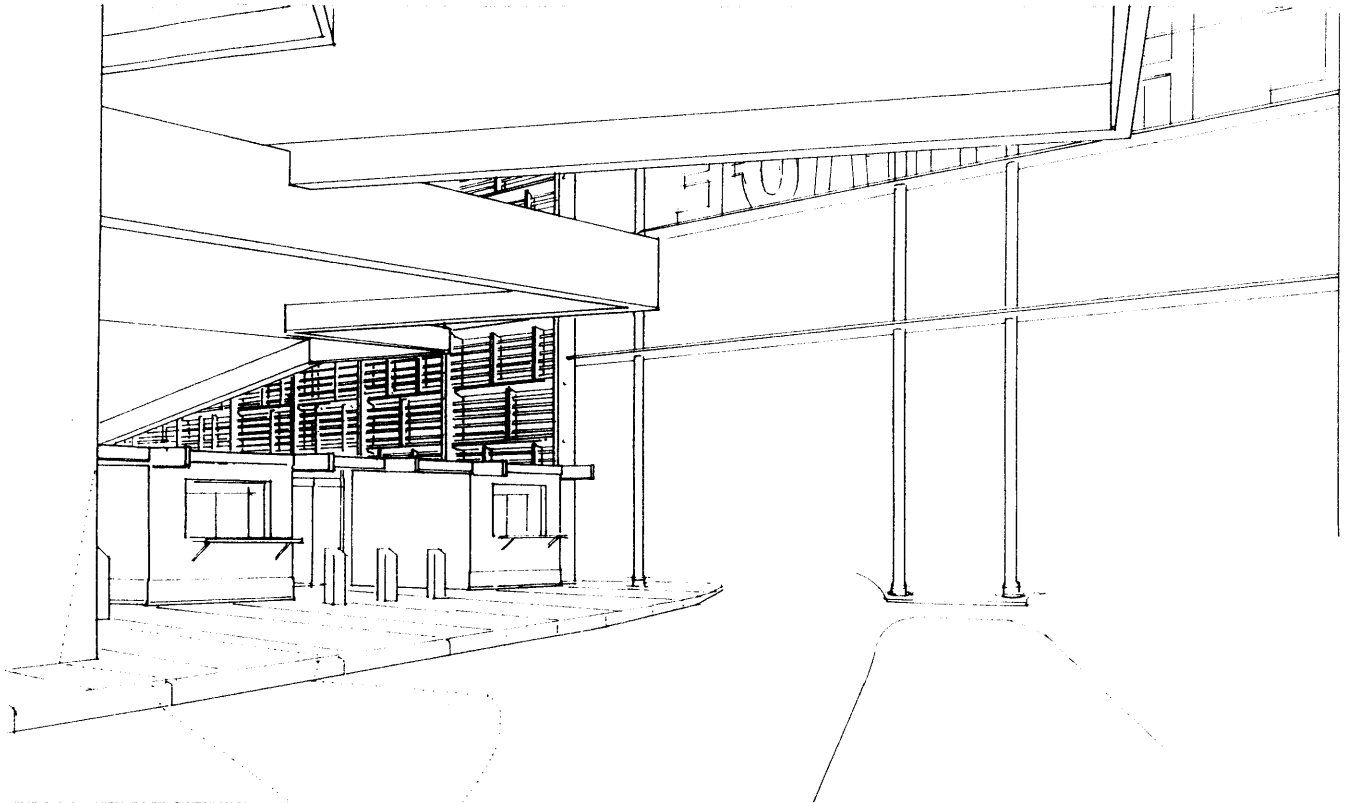


f 2.2.22 c North Facade.



f2.2.24 At the Intersection, montage



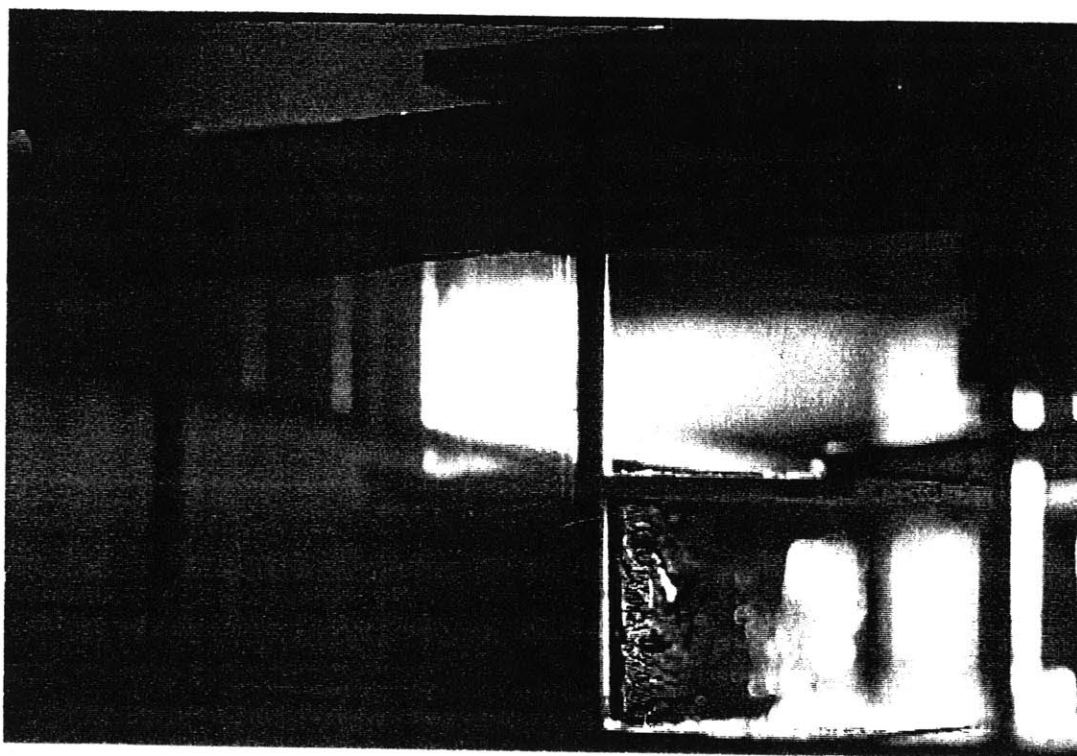


f2.2.25 At the Intersection, overl

Conclusion: A Full Basket?

The last remaining cocoa is the addition of people to the mix. This would necessarily involve the projection of the thesis into reality, a liberty I take for the sake of discussion.

Nothing, a Jamaican would muse, rubs his countrymen the wrong way as much as the figure of authority commanding their actions and interfering with their steadfast daily routine. This is why the thesis sets out guidelines for action in reclaiming the park from its exile - why it does not attempt to specify every moment, preferring for the enabling quality of the design to be augmented by and have its gradual effect on the community. Having introduced a framework conceived in the pluralist spirit, and indeed derived from latent historical orders, it is left to see what the will of people can accomplish in re-taking, and keeping their public place. Having given an impression, I, as architects often do, await expression, the reaction and critique by the user. This is ultimately what gives it a life, as when the four walls of a house are embellished by the human touch of its occupants. In Jamaica, this is what gives it permanence, if anything may be called so in our modern existence. It is with a sincere belief in the potential of architecture to so empower individuals, and a confidence in the Jamaican dynamic to affect social adjustment, that I offer this work.



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- 1.1.1 Zach, *Insight Guides: Jamaica*, p. 21.
- 1.1.2 Johnson, *Kingston: Portrait of A City*, p. 43.
- 1.1.3 Johnson, p. v.
- 1.1.4 Reps, *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States*, p. 7.
- 1.1.5 Reps, p. 14.
- 1.1.6 Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed*, p. 160.
- 1.1.7 Higman, p. 252.
- 1.1.8 Higman, p. 90.
- 1.1.9 Higman, p. 282.
- 1.1.10 Higman, p. 219.
- 1.1.11 Higman, p. 287.
- 1.1.12 National Library of Jamaica photograph, # N/15783.
- 1.1.13 Jamaica Survey Department Map.
- 1.1.15 *Shell Company Road Map of Jamaica* (Kingston: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1985, 87, 89).
- 1.1.19 *Programme of The Opening Of Parliament 1994-95* (Kingston: Jamaica Printing Services Limited, 1992), p. 1.
- 1.1.21 Zach, p. 128.
- 1.2.1 *Daily Gleaner* (Kingston) article, from Nat'l Library (Tom Redcam Ave.) Collection on National Heroes Park, date and page no. indiscernible.
- 1.2.2 Based on Survey Dept. Map of 1958.
- 1.2.5 National Library photograph, # N/3811.
- 2.1.4 Zach, p. 129.
- 2.1.6 Zach, p. 266.
- 2.2.3 Survey Department aerial photograph, 1988.
- 2.2.8 Johnson, p. 88.
- 2.2.11 Zach, p. 188.